

Invisible Landscapes

*Interpreting the unconventional
cultural landscape of Surfers Paradise*



*vision is the art of
seeing things invisible
Jonathan Swift*



Roy White
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Invisible Landscapes

Interpreting the unconventional cultural landscape of Surfers Paradise

School of Design and Built Environment
A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
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Victoria Ann Jones
Bachelor of Planning & Design (University of Melbourne)
Graduate Diploma Urban Planning (Victoria University of Technology)
Graduate Diploma Urban Design (Queensland University of Technology)

*Our forebears kindly searched the earth for such a place as this
They never knew their great grand kids would consider it such bliss
So to this Golden Strip of Queensland, in retirement I have come
To such an aura of good health, exuberance, and fun
The feel of sun, the pound of surf, a leisurely way of life
Induces happy people, one can't envisage strife
The hinterland is beautiful (what odd shaped bumps and mounds?)
Forest glades, running brooks, a joy of scents and sounds
I hope they never spoil it, just to make a buck
Keep it just the way it is not housing run amuck*

Excerpt from poem by Ian Perkins, Broadbeach
Gold Coast Bulletin 6 September 1979, p6

ABSTRACT

In most, if not all cultural landscapes there is a fascination with the visible landscape. Aesthetics are a primary carrier of meaning in the culture and identity of cities, however, reliance on what is visible to interpret the landscape denies substantive recognition of the complexity of meanings and values embedded in the landscape. If we are to gain a more rounded appreciation of cultural landscapes, we need to become better at complex perception to include consideration of the economic, social and political landscapes which are integral to the substance of the city.

This dissertation focuses on a case study of Gold Coast City, Queensland, Australia. It is a city with dominant post-modern mannerisms, whose physical form and expression eschew the conventional socio-political order of cities, confounding proper understanding of its cultural landscape. It is also fast-growing, greatly reliant on its tourism and housing construction economies. Its dynamic and constantly evolving cultural landscape, used as the basis for marketing and promotion, is a precious resource. To manage this resource effectively, and ensure that the city continues to be 'The Coast with the Most' that is 'Always Changing, Ever Amazing'¹, we need to understand its cultural complexities better.

The study attempts to set wider interpretative parameters for cultural landscapes, through revealing 'invisible landscapes' which cannot be conveyed instantaneously through sight-seeing tours or snapshot imagery. While not the focus of this study, emerging from it are implications for managing the city, which may have relevance to other cities that have unwittingly adopted some of the Gold Coast's post-modern thematic and spectacular characteristics.

¹ Current and former Tourism Queensland marketing slogans

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

This work has not been submitted for a degree or diploma at any higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this dissertation contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signed..... Date.....

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	I
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	II
STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP.....	III
TABLE OF CONTENTS	IV
LIST OF TABLES & FIGURES.....	VI
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER	1
1.2 RATIONALE FOR PROJECT AND ITS FOCUS ON SURFERS PARADISE	1
1.3 KEY DEFINITIONS.....	2
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	3
1.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE RESEARCH PROJECT	4
1.5.1 Analytical Process.....	4
1.5.2 Qualitative Data Inquiry.....	6
1.6 STRUCTURE OF DISSERTATION.....	6
1.7 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE	7
2.0 HISTORICAL CONTEXT.....	9
2.1 QUEENSLAND: A PECULIAR STATE	9
2.2 THE GOLD COAST: AN UNCONVENTIONAL AUSTRALIAN CITY	13
2.2.1 Colonial Gold Coast 1840s-1870s	13
2.2.2 The Emergence of Difference 1870s-1957	14
2.2.3 Playground of the Australian Dream 1957-1980s.....	14
2.2.4 A City of Suburbs 1980s – present	16
2.2.5 Points of Difference	17
2.2.6 History of Planning	21
2.3 HISTORICAL LIKENESSES WITH EAST COAST FLORIDA USA.....	25
3.0 POSITIONING THE RESEARCH IN THEORY & PRACTICE	31
3.1 CULTURAL LANDSCAPE CONCEPTS & PRACTICE	31
3.1.1 Fascination with the Visual Landscape.....	31
3.1.2 Heritage Interpretations of Landscapes.....	32
3.1.3 Landscape as Text.....	32
3.1.4 Reading the Invisible Landscapes.....	33

3.1.5	Inconsistencies in Cultural Landscape Values	34
3.2	CONCEPTS OF PLANNING & DESIGN FOR DYNAMIC BEACHSIDE TOURIST CITIES	35
3.2.1	Normative Understandings of Cities	35
3.2.2	Spontaneous Expression as a City	36
3.2.3	Coming to Grips with the Post-Industrial Cities	36
3.2.4	Heritage Interpretations of Cities	40
3.2.5	New Urbanism, Celebration & the Gold Coast's Crisis of Confidence	43
3.2.6	The Cultural Centrality of the Beach.....	44
3.2.7	The Importance of Place Distinctiveness for Tourist Cities.....	48
3.2.8	Sustainable Tourism.....	49
3.2.9	Commodification of the Tourist Landscape	50
3.2.10	Marketing & Promotion as Cultural Representation of the City	53
3.3	THEORETICAL RESPONSE TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	55
4.0	RESEARCH TECHNIQUE.....	57
4.1	CHOICE OF THE DATA SOURCE.....	57
4.2	ABOUT THE GOLD COAST BULLETIN	58
4.3	SELECTION OF YEARS	58
4.4	SEVEN-STEPS OF DATA PROCESSING	59
5.0	QUINTESSENTIAL SURFERS PARADISE	63
5.1	PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE READING - CORE THEMES	65
5.2	ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE READING – CORE THEMES	87
5.3	SOCIAL LANDSCAPE READING – CORE THEMES	97
5.4	POLITICAL LANDSCAPE READING – CORE THEMES.....	105
6.0	THE ROLE OF INVISIBLE LANDSCAPES.....	125
7.0	CONCLUSION	129
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	i-iv
	APPENDICES (VOLUME 2)	
1.0	PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE READING	
2.0	ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE READING	
3.0	SOCIAL LANDSCAPE READING	
4.0	POLITICAL LANDSCAPE READING	
5.0	GOLD COAST PLANNING SCHEME EXCERPTS	
6.0	RESEARCH TECHNIQUE SAMPLES	

LIST OF FIGURES & TABLES

Figure 1	Analytical Process.....	5
Figure 2	Diagram of the Four, Single-Perspective Landscape Readings	61
Table 1	Desired Environmental Outcomes – Gold Coast Planning Scheme (draft)	23
Table 2	Data Collection by Number of Newspaper Items	60
Table 3	Substance of the Cultural Landscape – Summary of Core Themes.....	63
Table 4	Physical Landscape Reading – Summary of Core Themes	65
Table 5	Economic Landscape Reading – Summary of Core Themes.....	87
Table 6	Social Landscape Reading – Summary of Core Themes	97
Table 7	Political Landscape Reading – Summary of Core Themes.....	105

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview Of Chapter

This chapter gives some background to the genesis of this research project. It provides a rationale for its undertaking and in particular, its focus on Surfers Paradise and explains several of the key terms associated with the study. It poses the research questions and explains the conceptual framework, outlining the analytical process and the data collection and inquiry method used in responding to the research questions. The structure of the dissertation is explained and contribution to knowledge is stated.

1.2 Rationale for Research Project & its Focus on Surfers Paradise

The cultural landscape of the Gold Coast is its key resource for attracting tourists and new settlers. It must be sustained if the city is to continue to prosper. The form and expression of the cultural landscape are unconventional within Australian urbanism. These differences constitute a competitive advantage, but they also confound normative interpretation and render it difficult to read in more than a physical sense, fettering the attainment of deep understandings of the cultural landscape. The Gold Coast is also a rapidly changing landscape, and efforts to interpret and evaluate it can be quickly out-dated. It has been suggested that *'perhaps the reason why the Gold Coast is so hard to characterise is because it won't stay still for long enough to be analysed.'* (Stewart 2001). Without an established tradition of cultural analysis and a solid intellectual foundation for interpretation of the meanings and change agents within the landscape, misunderstandings occur, and some decision-making that is not in the best interests of the developing cultural landscape and image of the city is inevitable.

This project aims to unravel and elucidate the causes and meanings embedded in the cultural landscape. It focuses on Surfers Paradise because it is the 'Jewel in the Crown' and most potent image in the urban landscape. For many, Surfers Paradise is synonymous with the Gold Coast. It is the subject of much affection, much derision, and also parody in literature, film and television. Most critically, it is a cultural landscape that is widely misunderstood, and while seemingly robust and distinctive in a visual sense, there are economic, social and political factors at play within the physical landscape, some of which transcend and threaten to undermine its vitality.

This research uses a technique that has been developed to facilitate interpretation of the cultural landscape from simultaneous, multiple perspectives. It offers the opportunity to understand better and without extraneous effort, the complex and interconnected themes of its historical development and the embedded cultural values (invisible landscapes).

It is suggested that these invisible landscapes are the key to gaining a more rounded consciousness and appreciation of the cultural landscape, and hoped that by developing a solid foundation for interpretation and comprehension, more effective decision-making with regard to sustaining this precious commodity will eventuate.

1.3 Key Definitions

Several key terms appearing throughout the dissertation are defined here.

1.3.1 The Cultural Landscape

The cultural landscape is constantly evolving, humanised, landscape. It consists of a dialectic between the natural physical setting, the human modifications to that setting, and the meanings of the resulting landscape to insiders and outsiders. Continuous interaction between these three elements takes place over time. Cultural landscapes need not be visible to the eye. They can be represented as stories, myths, beliefs and values, which may be applied to all landscapes including wilderness landscapes, ordinary landscapes or designed landscapes. The concept of cultural landscape therefore embodies a dynamic understanding of history, in which past, present and future are seamlessly connected.

Armstrong and O'Hare (1999) with minor adaptation,
as shown by under-lining, to allow for 'invisible landscapes'

1.3.2 Invisible Landscapes

Invisible landscapes are the landscapes that we cannot see with our eyes, nor read without understanding of history.

Jones 2001

1.3.3 Urban Design

Urban Design is a three-dimensional, integrated approach to shaping the urban environment. It is variously understood as a skill (the urban designer), a product (a set of characteristics defining quality) and a process (the techniques, collaboration and tools to achieve a quality environment). With an emphasis on process, it is accepted that:

- *urban design is a multi-disciplinary undertaking*
- *a wide range of professionals should be involved in urban design*
- *these professionals and the process should be informed and guided by the community*
- *an essential characteristic of the product must be its close relationship to the local environment and culture.*

Australian Local Government Association 1997

1.3.4 Resort Cities

Cities designed expressly for consumption by visitors. At their core is an intentional, exclusive space devoted wholly to lodging, dining, entertainment and shopping.

Fainstein and Judd (1999:262)

1.3.5 Sun-Belt Urbanism

Sun-belt urbanism is a phenomenon that has occurred since World War 2, primarily in North America and Australia. It manifests as expansive metropolitan forms in coastal regions with warm, sunny climates. These forms grow primarily through migration of people from cooler places, many of whom are retirees, choosing to relocate for lifestyle reasons. Sun-belt metropolises are largely suburban, a form dictated by the motor vehicle as the primary and often only mode of transport. Due to rapid growth they are typically under-provisioned with public infrastructure.

Further explanation of these definitions is provided in Chapter Two wherein the research is positioned in theory associated with cultural landscapes, and planning and design for dynamic tourist cities.

1.4 Research Questions

The purpose of the research is to investigate the cultural landscape of the Gold Coast (in particular Surfers Paradise) to facilitate understanding of its culturally specific evolution. The thrust of the research is interpretation. It aims to reveal the unique composition of the cultural landscape and its many obvious and subtle dimensions.

At the outset it is proposed that:

The Gold Coast (in particular Surfers Paradise) can be interpreted in ways that reveal the complexities, causes and meanings embedded in its cultural landscape.

To deal with this proposition, two specific research questions are addressed.

Research Question 1 ***What is the substance of the cultural landscape of Surfers Paradise?***

Research Question 2 ***If the complexion of the landscape is imbued with causes and meanings greater than its physical substance, what is the role of such qualities, i.e. invisible landscapes, which are not apparent to the uninformed observer?***

1.5 Conceptual Framework for the Research Project

1.5.1 Analytical Process

The analytical process developed and applied incorporated three phases.

Phase One involved parallel tracking of three parts:

- (i) Positioning the case study in history
- (ii) Positioning the research in theory and practice
- (iii) Data collection and interpretation to develop multiple single-perspective readings of the cultural landscape. (The single data source is local newspaper articles 1949 – 1999)

Together these developed a method and a case study response to the research proposition.

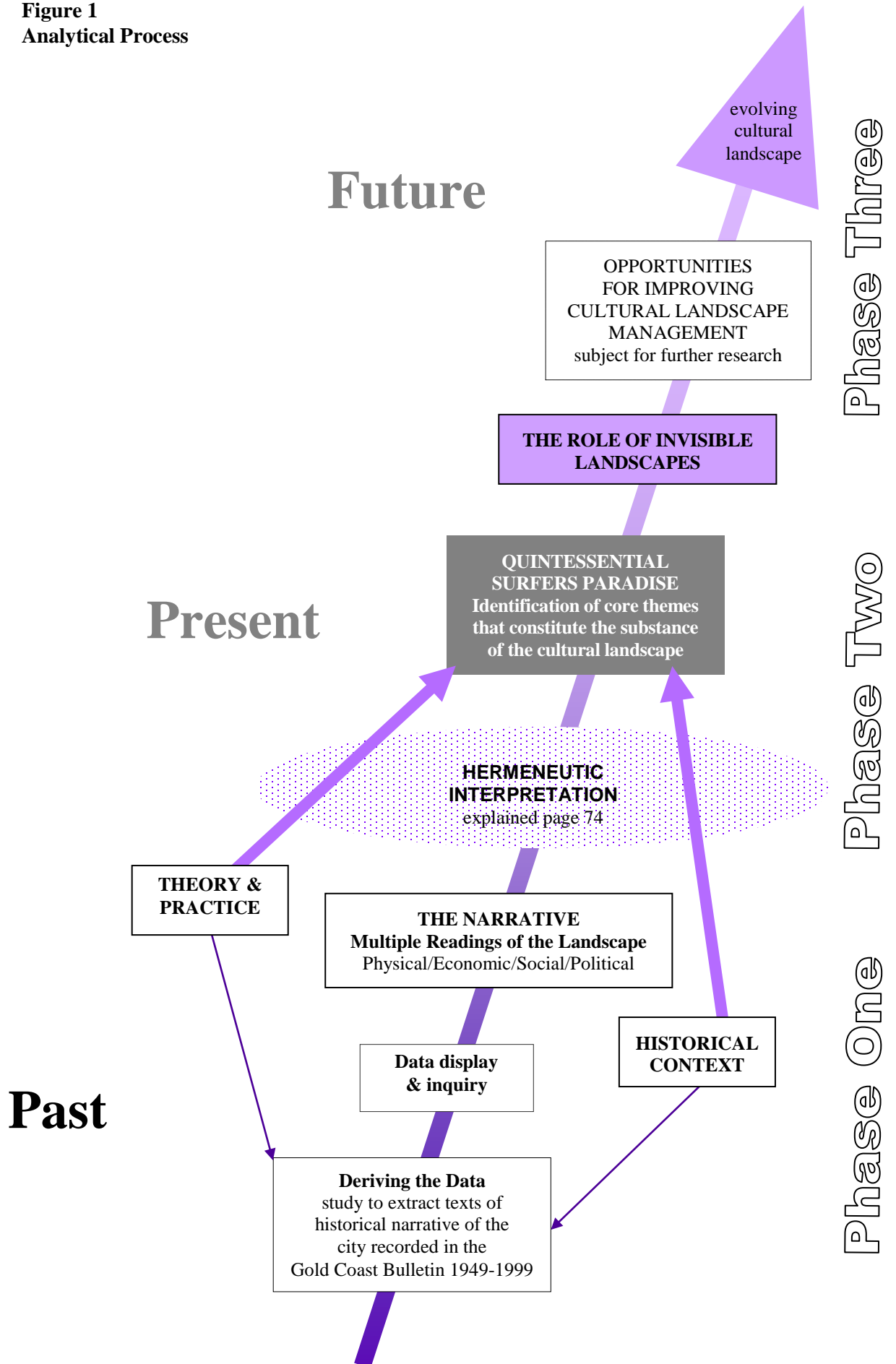
In **Phase Two**, responding to Research Question 1, the multiple landscape readings were triangulated against history, theory and practice and synthesised to define core themes, which can be considered to constitute the substance of the cultural landscape of Surfers Paradise.

Phase Three analysed the findings of the previous phase, and, in response to Research Question 2, identified the importance of invisible landscapes in understanding and managing the cultural landscape.

It follows that Phase One is mainly located in the past, Phase Two deals with the present and Phase Three offers lessons for future management and sustenance of the cultural landscape. The emphasis of this research project is on Phase Two - reading and interpretation of the cultural landscape in the present. The project, as research for a Coursework Masters degree, is necessarily limited in scope and only lightly addresses Phase Three which opens up a whole new subject area for further study about cultural landscape management.

Figure 2 represents this analytical process diagrammatically.

Figure 1
Analytical Process



1.5.2 Qualitative Data Inquiry

The single source of data for the case study is the principal commercial newspaper of the region, from which data was collected through examining papers published during the final year of each decade from the 1940s to the 1990s.

The newspaper, earlier called the South Coast Bulletin, changed its name after the formation of Gold Coast City in 1959 and continues to be published daily as the Gold Coast Bulletin. The reason for choosing this time period will become apparent. As explained in Chapter 2.2, it encompasses the period in which Gold Coast City as we recognise it today has largely developed.

The data inquiry was an iterative process that involved seven steps:

Step 1 – Trawling through newspapers

Step 2 – Sorting and display of data into tables for each sample year

Step 3 – Compiling the data into raw, single-perspective readings

Step 4 – Massaging the readings into a structure based of core and/or recurrent issues

Step 5 – Synthesising and working the readings into cohesive prose

Step 6 – Elucidating core themes

Step 7 – Indexing the core themes to present the quintessences of Surfers Paradise

These steps are explained in detail in Part 4.4.

1.6 Structure of Dissertation

This dissertation is structured in 7 Parts.

Chapter One places the research objective in context. A rationale for the research is presented and a conceptual framework for the research is outlined. Definitions are provided for the key terms used. The research questions are posed and the research methodology is introduced. The dissertation structure is outlined and contribution to knowledge is stated.

Chapter Two sets the historical context for the cultural peculiarities of Surfers Paradise, within broader frames of the Gold Coast and the State of Queensland.

Chapter Three positions the research within relevant realms of theory and practice.

Chapter Four explains in detail the methodology for the case study data collection and inquiry.

Chapter Five presents the principal interpretive outcome as the core themes within four singular-perspective landscape readings – physical, economic, social and political, which have been distilled from the newspaper data source and represent the substance of the cultural landscape of the Gold Coast with an emphasis on Surfers Paradise.

Chapter Six examines the interpretive value and empirical role of invisible landscapes.

Chapter Seven concludes the research with discussion of the research outcomes and the potential application of this approach to interpretation of other cultural landscapes.

Importantly, the *Appendices* are an integral component of the dissertation. They contain the four, single-perspective landscape readings, which are the result of intensive and time-consuming labour.

1.7 Contribution to Knowledge

In recent years, through my professional work in strategic planning and urban design at the Gold Coast, and as a resident of Surfers Paradise, I have observed the dynamics at play in this fascinating and often misunderstood city.

Having been involved in production of the Gold Coast Urban Heritage and Character Study (Allom Lovell & others 1997) and instrumental in establishment of Gold Coast City Council's Heritage Advisory Service and its host of initiatives to protect and raise awareness of the City's urban heritage and character values, it was apparent to me that qualitative research to facilitate better understanding of the cultural landscape would be beneficial to the City.

As a student of the built environment I state up-front my bias towards developing better urban design processes and outcomes.

The present is an interesting time for the Gold Coast with increasing tensions between its tourism and residential roles and there is a gap in research to inform disciplined debate about issues affecting the cultural landscape and to guide policy and management initiatives to negotiate cultural aspects of the city.

The cultural landscape is a precious resource for residents and visitors. In the words of Michel Foucault "we are all tourists in that our gaze alights constantly upon a world of which we must make sense". This research attempts to make sense of the cultural landscape. It provides interpretation and in doing so, intends to also transform perceptions of the city. It complements other current research projects including; the '*Gold Coast Visioning*' project by the Griffith University CRC for Sustainable Tourism, and the recently published '*Contested Terrains: Investigating Queensland's Cultural Landscapes*' by the Queensland University of Technology Cultural Landscape Research Unit which has developed a new method for negotiating contest within cultural landscapes.

Beyond the Gold Coast, it is intended that this research project will contribute to refinements in cultural landscape theory and interpretation methods and to the operationalising of such for use in urban planning, design and management of other cities.

2.0 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

2.1 Queensland: A Peculiar State

Interpretation of the Gold Coast needs to be set within a general understanding of the broader history and development of the social structure and political economy of the State of Queensland, which in several key respects is peculiar within the Australian context.

Former journalist, Queenslander Andrew McGahan's recent novel *Last Drinks*, inspired by the Fitzgerald Inquiry and its era in Queensland, conveys some potent insights to the narrative of the socio-political landscape. The main character says:

We knew some things of course, the things that everyone knew – that Queensland was different to the rest of Australia, that things worked in Queensland in a way they didn't anywhere else. But we didn't know why. Or more importantly, we didn't know who. (2000:23)

Queensland and its history, was and is different to other states in Australia.

Conservatism has dominated the political economy and social structure. Described as utilitarian environmentalism or rural fundamentalism, Queensland's outlook from colonial times has been concerned with exploitation of its natural resources in a manner not adopted by other states. (Thorpe 1996, Cribb 1984)

In 1932, Labor Premier, William Forgan Smith stated:

I take the view that, no matter how much secondary industries may be established in Queensland, this state will continue for all time to be a primary producing state. It is desirable that it should be so. Primary production is the natural occupation of mankind. No one would desire for this state the industrialised type of civilisation which exists in many countries today. (Carroll, 1978:403 in Galligan 1986:51-52)

Part of the concept of rural fundamentalism is that "all that is worthy and useful in morality, religion, societal values and the economy stems from the land and its usage." (Cribb:1984:50-1 in Galligan 1986:52). Manufacturing and the industrial sector has always been a minor element in the overall configuration of the state. There were spasmodic attempts to promote manufacturing, yet these failed to impact significantly on the state's economy. Galligan (1986) attributes this to the power of southern monopolies that viewed peripheral states such as Queensland, as captive markets rather than sites of investment.

Much of Queensland's political exceptionalism can be attributed to geography and demographics. Spatially, Queensland is vast with a decentralised population. The landscapes of Queensland are also diverse and there is powerful regionalism related to land use character types.

With well-established industrial economies, the settlement patterns of New South Wales and Victoria are characterised by a concentration of approximately 70% of the state population in their respective dominant capital cities of Sydney and Melbourne. By comparison, Brisbane, Queensland's capital has only about 45% of Queensland residents. Brisbane has had to compete for economic activity not only with other capital cities, but also with a number of thriving provincial coastal cities such as Townsville, Rockhampton and Gladstone. There has been a pervading national mentality that it is no more than a branch office town for the southern capitals. Decentralisation has tended to hinder the consolidation of local capital and retarded growth of manufacturing and a 'branch-plant' phenomenon; that is a high level of control by outside corporations, has prevailed. (Lunn 1978, Galligan 1986)

With an abundance of natural resources, Queensland was seen to have a 'comparative advantage' in the primary sector, and "government policies made a virtue out of necessity." (Galligan 1986:65) First priority has always been given to economic development based on land use, whether for agriculture, pastoralism or more recently extractive mining, although since the 1970s, mass tourism has also emerged as a significant economic sector. McGahan's character so ineloquently describes Queensland's economic development:

For twenty years Brisbane was a military prison and took all the crap that was dumped here. Then the big pastoralists from New South Wales and Victoria moved in, and they ran Queensland like one giant paddock for their sheep. Then later the same people ran it as one great big open cut mine. It's always been like that here. Now we're just one big fucking beach. The whole world comes and sits on our sand. That's the weird thing, George. We got nothing but lots of land, lots of minerals and lots of coastline. That's all anyone wants from Queensland, and in the meantime they just want us to get out of their way and let them take it. (2000: 215-216)

Tourism was a natural extension of the dominant utilitarian environmentalism, which continued to exploit Queensland's natural environment.

It was different, and meanwhile the climate was warm, the beaches were golden, the reef was a Wonder of the World, and taxes were low. Out west were some of the biggest cattle stations and coal mines in the world. It was a boom state. Tourists and investors came from everywhere." (McGahan 2000: 62)

Cribb (1984:197in Galligan 1986:52) draws a connection between Queensland's rural fundamentalism and 'anti-intellectualism', claiming that so-called 'intellectual' matters, have ranked low on the state's public agenda. The emphasis on economic development based on land use has denigrated the flourishing of academic or artistic pursuits.

Half the Queensland government was running on the same ticket, even the premier, for Queenslanders were always wary of the more sophisticated types – they liked their representatives to be awkward and stumbling. They mistook it for honesty. (McGahan 2000:143)

Queensland has been widely criticised in the national arena for the standard of its educational system and support for arts and cultural activities, seen as inferior to the same in other states.

Another core element of Queensland's rural conservatism is its nostalgic loyalty to traditional cultural values, which are considered more worthy than others. Long-held values should be accorded the greatest respect. Questioning or dissenting from them is inappropriate. Dissenters are perceived to be communists, radicals, stirrers or persons who generally wish to destroy the very fabric of Queensland society. (Cribb 1984:50-51 in Galligan 1986:53)

That was Queensland George. Anyone who complained ... you just said that they didn't understand the Queensland way of doing things. You called them a communist or something, or said they came from down south. (McGahan 2000:220)

Conservative values and actions were personified in Premier Joh Bjelke-Peterson and his conservative regime that governed the state from 1957 – 1989.

Queensland was an addiction. Maligned and scorned by the rest of the country – an intellectual backwater, a redneck breeding ground for ignorance and bigotry and corruption, and it had earned the titles – but still, it infected the soul somehow. Demanded love of those it bore and bred, no matter how weary and sickened they might become of the pace. Demanded loyalty, no matter how bizarre its government and its laws, no matter what political oddities were thrown up over the years. (McGahan 2000:60-61)

The Joh Bjelke-Petersen government held a tight rein on civil liberties. Political censorship was substantial and unionism regarded as subversive. Protest marching was illegal. There was also a total dedication to, and belief in, state chauvinism that was one of Bjelke-Petersen's strengths and one of the main reasons for his enduring success (Lunn 1978:xi)

Simultaneously, the Government maintained traditions of anachronistic laws founded on moral issues that outlawed or at least restricted matters such as nude bathing, liquor licensing and gambling.

Mackay has suggested that, along with the warmer climate, the sense that Queensland society retains many of the characteristics of Australian society before it entered the 'Age of Redefinition', seems to be one of the things that attracts older Australians from Sydney and Melbourne to Queensland.

Queenslanders will often claim that they have managed to cling to a way of life and a set of values which are harder to sustain in the southern states. (Mackay 1984:247)

As an example he cites that multiculturalism is regarded by Queenslanders as an essentially southern pre-occupation and he warns that attachment to 'recycled culture' may simply recycle our myths, and lead us to dwell in perpetual adolescence. (1984:250)

Queenslanders have been unaware of a firm identity and culture as had developed in the southern states. Scattered communities have clung to values, elsewhere perceived as old or out-moded. Identity and culture have been most commonly expressed through the State's natural assets, including climate, and the relaxed lifestyle that goes with it. A peculiar contradiction has existed with the ingrained strict morality of conservatism occurring along with a broader sense of willingness to allow creation of new identities without any inhibitions. Queensland not only saw itself lacking in identity, but set out to create one.

From the 1950s, recognising its underdevelopment in the national economy, and perhaps spurred by its weak cultural identity the Queensland government to vigorously encourage growth (Galligan 1986:67). It achieved such through promoting an image of Queensland as a bastion of free enterprise, facilitating large-scale, externally controlled investments, and forging close links with growth areas in the world economy. Queensland was open to any ideas that meant investment. Strong emphasis was placed on attracting foreign investments and markets, initially mining, but later real estate with the growth of tourism and sun-belt migration. Incentives to attract migration from southern states were introduced, such as the abolition of duties on death and gifts in 1978.

As a product of southern money, and of foreign investment since the 1980s, there is ironic animus against and a perceived threat of invasion by 'southerners' and other foreigners, particularly the Japanese. (Mackay 1986:204)

In 1984, the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation was empowered by the State Government to undertake joint ventures with private firms in resort development, most notably rezoning of crown lands in areas potentially profitable for tourism. At the same time, Russ Hinze, Member for Albert and Minister for Local Government gained notoriety and a lengthy record of overriding local authorities that were seen to hinder large-scale property and construction development.

In 1987, revelations of corruption issuing from the Fitzgerald Inquiry into police conduct, which involved the Premier personally, brought a traumatic end to the 'Joh era'. The national reputation of Queensland, symbolised by the 'white-shoe brigade' and 'brown paper bag dealings', stems from this time.

A National Party revolt saw Joh Bjelke-Petersen overturned as Premier, but this was not enough to save the destabilised National Party, and the Labor Party, led by Wayne Goss swept into power in 1989 to dramatically change the nature of Queensland politics.

Recent years have seen changing voting patterns, as evidenced by the 2001 State Election in which Labor candidates were elected in seven of the eight State seats in the Gold Coast region.

Despite this, entrenched conservatism persists and is noticeable, particularly to outsiders. Queensland has spawned the new moralisation of politics with ex-Nationals founding New Right and One Nation Parties. Some have likened rural Queensland to the Deep North (Lunn 1978, Theroux 1992).

Queensland is known for its conservative views and its gun-owning rednecks. Politically it resembles a state in the American Deep South... The farther north you go in Queensland the tougher the views (Theroux 1992:53)

There is a powerful ideology about Queensland and Queenslanders not found elsewhere in Australia. Thorpe calls this 'Queenslandism' a state of 'hypocrisies'.

2.2 The Gold Coast: An Unconventional City

To most citizens and visitors the Gold Coast is a city without a past. The history of the city we see today is brief and unusual compared to other places. Its brevity, however, does not exclude richness and meaning and in fact the condensed time span of substantial development is perhaps what makes it all the more fascinating as an urban entity. This section initially provides an overview of the Gold Coast's historical development. Following that is a rationale for why the resultant urban landscape is unconventional in form and expression, and then a brief chronology of the evolution of the city's planning legislation.

2.2.1 Colonial Gold Coast

The early history of the region was absolutely conventional in Australian terms. Settled originally by timber getters in the 1850s, and soon after by cotton, dairy, arrowroot and cane farmers, early towns within the region were conventional rural settlements. Rocky Point and the small centres of West Burleigh and Mudgeeraba survive today as reminders. The rivers south of Brisbane made access by coach difficult and while roads developed over time to provide access to these inland settlements, no substantial road infrastructure existed. Most transport of passengers and produce was by steamship between Tweed and Brisbane.

2.2.2 The Emergence of Difference

Since the mid 1870s, however, when the 'marine township' of Southport was laid out, the area was clearly a place of difference. Southport was the first expression of what has become the Gold Coast, designed as a 'resort' for the new colony.

When Queensland Governor Musgrave chose to build his own holiday house at Southport, Brisbane society, previously attending at Sandgate, followed. Estate subdivision opened up with names such as 'Ocean View' and 'Sea Glint'. By the time the Grand Hotel was built for the more ordinary holidaymaker in 1886, the newspapers of the day were frankly critical of Southport as a place of luxury, even excess (Longhurst 1994). A similar boom occurred some years later at Coolangatta. Early newspaper reports scorned Coolangatta as a place where holidaymakers apparently abandoned not only 'good taste' but social standards as well (Longhurst 1994:94). While considered vulgar by many, these settlements had a sense of fantasy and escapism directly related to their role as a holiday destination. They had no industry and no permanent population to speak of. Their population ebbed and flowed according to the seasons and stayed or not according to the pleasure offered. Like English models of holiday towns, the focus of these coastal settlements was their social life.

Surf bathing from the turn of the century and the arrival of the railway from Brisbane saw the development of further coastal resort settlements on the beachfront from Southport to Coolangatta. With construction of the highway and the bridging of rivers along the coastal dunes in the 1930s, the small beach settlements between Southport and Coolangatta were linked.

2.2.3 Playground of the Australian Dream

It was not until the 1950s however, that this place began to develop in the form that is recognisable today. The post-war land boom consolidated the small beach resorts, that were dotted along the coast, into a continuous ribbon of tourist-orientated development. This 'strip' became an urban entity in its own right - a resort city - based not on European models, but on a new form of urbanism similar to places developing in Florida and parts of California, USA.

The seeds of this new era were sown by the GIs who poured into the Gold Coast during the Second World War, bringing the music, clothes and attitudes of a new generation. The 1950s became a period of affluence, political stability and optimism. Growth in real wages, coupled with low unemployment, a boom in consumer spending and technological labour saving devices meant that life became less demanding both at work and in the home. For the first time, Australians were physically and financially able to enjoy their leisure time and out of this was borne a belief in the philosophy that there was more to life than work. The holiday, for many

Australians, became an expression of that new affluence, and the growing accessibility of the motor car to the ordinary Australian family, provided not only transportation, but became a symbol of independence and freedom.

The Gold Coast became 'the playground of the Australian dream'. It offered ordinary people the opportunity to be together in an egalitarian environment. Regardless of wealth or status, access to the beach was available to all. It also allowed them to ignore the stricter conservatism, social conventions and dress codes of everyday life. The beach symbolised freedom and fun and became an integral part of Australian life and culture.

By the 1950s, most visitors from Brisbane to the Gold Coast came by car. People stayed in camp grounds, beach shacks, guest houses, motels and hotels according to their budget. Visitors from the south also came by the new and glamorous aeroplane. Regular air services began after the war and Ansett-ANA opened its first office at the Coast in 1957.

The new affluence began to shape the urban expression of the Gold Coast. Stanley Korman, who bought the modest Surfers Paradise hotel in 1957 is best known for the development of new international style accommodation, including the Lennox Broadbeach Hotel and the Chevron Hotel, famous for its Skyline Cabaret which revolutionised night time entertainment at the Gold Coast. The opening night of the Chevron brought the cream of Melbourne society to party on the Coast for the first time. Korman is also credited with pioneering reclamation of swampy land and introducing the Gold Coast to canal estate development. Drawing unashamedly on the US model of Miami, land reclamation began with the development of Chevron Island and Paradise Island in 1958. Canal Estates like the Isle of Capri, Miami Keys and Florida Gardens soon followed. These unique expressions of suburbia were part of the evolving fantasy and special lifestyle of the Gold Coast.

The Gold Coast's first tall building, Kinkabool (ten stories) opened in 1960. Most visitors to the Gold Coast spend their everyday lives in suburban homes. It was a definite thrill to holiday in a high rise apartment with ocean views. This phenomenon of highrise resort residential development followed the trend for tall buildings established earlier in Waikiki, Miami Beach, Biarritz and on the Mediterranean coasts of Spain, France and Italy. (McRobbie 1984:327) The 1970s saw massive surges in high rise development along the strip, predominantly in Surfers Paradise.

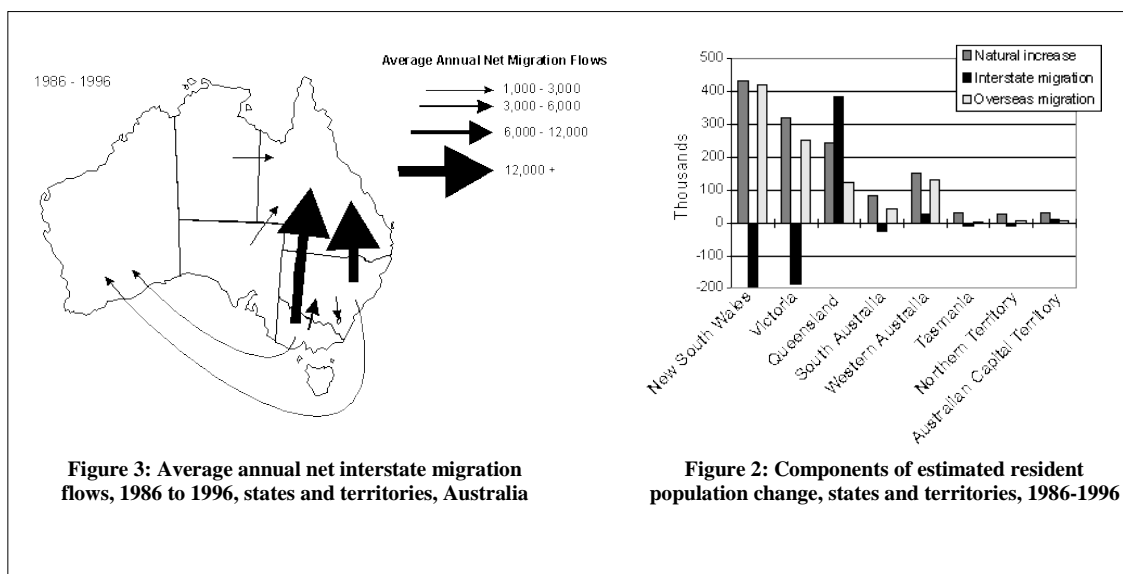
Suburban growth, that had rooted in the 1960s out of the credence that "owning your own house and a small patch of land represented the first step to a better life and a higher personal freedom and dignity", (Halberstram in introduction to Suburbia, Owens 1999) accelerated in the 1970s. Canal estate development extended further north and further inland, and conventional suburban

subdivision emerged, most notably Helensvale, which at that time was perceived as a satellite to the city.

2.2.4 A City of Suburbs

Massive growth and development, boosted by foreign investment continued in the 1980s. Along the coastline, redevelopment for tourist accommodation resulted in the consolidation of distinctive high rise nodes at, Surfers Paradise, Broadbeach, Coolangatta and to a lesser degree at Burleigh. Main beach followed trend in the 1990s. The construction industry grew and remains today as the city’s second largest economic sector (PFK 2000).

Suburban development exploded in the 1980s and has continued since, extending further and further into the Hinterland giving shape to a city of suburbs. The impetus for the suburban growth has been migration from the southern states, motivated by lifestyle attractiveness of the Gold Coast. Between 1986 and 1996, 52% of Queensland’s population growth was the result of inter-state migration, notably Victoria and NSW.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Demographic Statistics, Catalogue No. 3101.0

Bernard Salt in his recently published book titled ‘The Big Shift: Welcome to the Third Australian Culture’ says that “most Australians, regardless of where they live, understand what is meant by the concept of ‘the Gold Coast lifestyle’, and yet neither this concept nor the city existed at the mid-point of the 20th century.” (2001:128) He labels the Gold Coast, as the flash focal point of the new colony that is settling rapidly along the edges of the Australian continent in the form of beachside suburbia – a trend that is absolutely dominant and unlikely to relent in the foreseeable future. The Gold Coast’s population is approaching 420,000. Demographically it is the second largest local government area in Australia.

As suburban residential development creeps into the valleys and foothills of its hinterland, big city issues such as traffic are intensifying, there are increasing demands on city's resources by the permanent residential community and the supremacy of the tourism economy is weakening. There is a slow smudging of the familiarly distinctive, sharply defined urban landscape and increasingly common expressions of discontentment with the built environment.

Ironically, many such woes are levelled not at this creeping suburban ordinariness, but at Surfers Paradise, the most distinctive tourist icon which is widely regarded to have 'lost its shine'.

Surfers Paradise is the 'engine room' of the city. Its economic performance impacts on the economic well-being of the whole Gold Coast. The contribution of Surfers Paradise to the Gold Coast regional economy, including tourism and non-tourism related activities and flow-on effects is approximately 37% of the total. (PKF 2000).

Surfers Paradise has received significant attention in recent years. Efforts to 'bring back its former magic' have focused on the subject, with little recognition that the cause for its decline in popularity does not come entirely from within. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the broader changing urban context and culture is moderating Surfers Paradise's ascendancy. This phenomenon transcends specific physical, economic, social and political issues and needs to be understood as a symptom of the evolving cultural landscape.

2.2.5 Points of Difference

With some basic examination of the reasons for the city's unconventional urban form and practical expression it is indisputable that the Gold Coast is a logical result of its recent history, economy, topography, and socio-political framework.

(a) Unconventional Urban Form

The Gold Coast's settlement pattern stands apart from the more conventional, centred city based on the Greek agora or market place. It is a city without a primary centre. The idea of centres has been the focus of debate amongst town planners and certainly there is today, support for the strategy of three regional centres within the city boundaries - Southport, Beenleigh and the new town of Robina, but much of the real activity of the Gold Coast happens outside these regional centres. The perceived form of the city is not structured by these designated regional centres, but by the coastal strip and in the places on and off the strip.

This has occurred as the natural consequence of its geography, its industry, and its transportation systems.

Geography as a Generator of Urban Form

The Gold Coast's topography has dictated the overriding linear form. Founded on a coastal dune 'the strip' was, until recent decades, isolated from its hinterland by low-lying swampland. The City's 'industry' of tourism has reinforced that form, demanding that prime land is located, not at a centre, but within reasonable distance of the beach – its main attraction.

The river and the swamplands that isolated the coastal strip from its hinterland have been modified by massive drainage schemes and canal estates. This has, in effect, created a new urban typology that is also within easy access to beach. The pattern of geography is nevertheless apparent with man-made waterways acting still as a natural barrier between the coastal strip and the hinterland.

Further to the west the forests of the hinterland and the foothills of the ranges which frame the Gold Coast and limit the extent of its development, have similarly generated an urban typology of suburban and rural residential development nestling behind the linear coastal plain.

Tourism as a Generator of Urban Form

Economically the Gold Coast stands apart from 19th century port cities, strategic settlements or centres of agricultural and mineral wealth. It is a city without a conventional industrial or commercial base. Its economic base is tourism and the tall buildings on the beachfront represent that economic base in the same way that smokestacks might represent the industry of more conventional cities.

Colin Symes (1997:31) has written that:

With no industrial or cultural sites (not at least of a conventional kind) that ordinarily justify the existence of a city, the Gold Coast's *raison d'etre* rests primarily on the attractions it offers as a leisure space constructed around the beach and associated attractions. It is a place of escape, a refuge from more conventional cities and environments. ... demarcations between work and play have been abandoned, and the city exists for the sake of play rather than work.

The absence of a traditional economy in which the centre plays a logical role, in turn shapes the urban form of the city. Tourism has favoured access to those features and activities, which are spread along the length of the coast and denied the establishment of a conventional single business and activity centre.

Within its linear form, there are apparent core activity nodes such as Surfers Paradise, Broadbeach, Burleigh Heads and Coolangatta, but even these are typical of tourist cities worldwide, which Judd and Fainstein (1997:23) point out are dominated by retail and entertainment facilities and noticeably devoid of office and more serious business uses found in conventional cities.

Transport as a Generator of Urban Form

Long before the motor car became the dominant means of transportation of Australian society, the railway connecting Brisbane with the border town of Coolangatta emphasised the lineal nature of the Gold Coast and facilitated its development in its present form.

Conceived before the advent of surf bathing and the popularity of the beach, the train line nevertheless delivered visitors to the beaches through a series of hinterland towns, strung along the line from Nerang to Coolangatta. The logic of this linear form was reinforced in more recent years when the railway land became the Pacific Highway in the years following the closure of the railway in the 1960s.

The motor car itself as a symbol of social freedom, became part of, and sat perfectly with the developing image of the Gold Coast itself. The trail of motels, drive-in picture shows, banks and fast-food outlets which catered for the motorist, was a natural expression at the Gold Coast unlike other cities where these facilities were forced into existing urban fabric with inevitable dislocation and conflict.

Politics as a Generator of Urban Form

The Gold Coast's political culture, which has supported and indeed vigorously encouraged free-enterprise developmentism has contributed to what might be considered excesses and anomalies in its urban form. The city has been open to any ideas that mean investment, and there are clear instances within the urban fabric where developments, contrary to a conventional city order, have been allowed to occur. Many of these concur with the spate of State Ministerial rezonings that overrode the local government during the 'Joh' era, or more precisely the 'Hinze' era. These include Sanctuary Cove, the Sovereign Islands, the Paradise Centre and Southport, Labrador Park and Harbourtown shopping centres. Many less obvious examples are sprinkled throughout the city as strange elements such as projecting car park podiums or odd streetscaping treatments where development standards have been disregarded. Such anomalies and excesses can confuse and confound basic reading of the city.

(b) Unconventional Urban Expression

The urban expression of the Gold Coast is perhaps its most misunderstood aspect. In its buildings, and its urban design the special sense of fantasy and imagination is offensive to many who fail to understand its source. Three generators of the Gold Coast's unconventional urban expression are apparent. These are; its rapid growth and change; the supremacy of image led by Hollywood and television; and most importantly, its *raison d'être* as a place of tourism and fantasy.

Rapid Growth as a Generator of Urban Expression

Compared to conventional urban settlements in Australia, growth of the Gold Coast has been recent and dramatic. It is almost inconceivable that just fifty years ago, following the end of the Second World War, the population of the entire region south of Brisbane, was around 20,000. “By the early 1970s the Gold Coast was still not on the big-city horizon” but within the three decades since it has “effectively elbowed its way into the top 10 Australian cities” with a population approaching 420,000. (Salt 2001:54)

It is inevitable in the face of such growth that change to the urban fabric is constant and dramatic. Evidence of earlier forms is constantly swept aside in favour of the new as the simple pressure of population demands higher densities. A city can either expand or redevelop. Both are true at the Gold Coast but within the limited space available close to the water, redevelopment is and will continue to be a major factor.

Imagery of Hollywood and Television as a Generator of Urban Expression

Importantly, the city's growth has coincided with a period of architectural and planning practice in which image has become paramount. Hollywood and the promotion of image has influenced urban expression throughout the world since the 1930s mostly in buildings like picture and dance palaces, but post-war, with the advent of television, the special sense of fantasy was extended to more common, everyday environments.

At the Gold Coast, without a long history, the city has been unfettered by stylistic traditions that usually restrict popular expression in conventional cities. In addition, its role as a tourist city compounded its boldness and confidence to embrace the idea of insubstantial and vicarious imagery. This expression is clearly related to Disneyland and the idea that cities could be created out of nothing, manufacturing for themselves a nostalgia and meaning.

Matthew Condon writes about the Gold Coast in *A Night at the Pink Poodle* (1995:41):

They indulged in the fantasy without thinking how silly it was. That's what I liked about the Gold Coast, the blossoming of all these different fantasies, how they all merged together, got mixed up and became strange new hybrids.

In most Australian cities that expression is confined to suburban estates of ‘Federation or Georgian’ styled houses or themed shopping centres. At the Gold Coast the fantasy is most evident in its housing estates such as Adelphi Springs, Chamonix and The Palladian, where architectural expression reflects the imagery evoked in the name. However, this expression extends to names and signs and building facades, resort landscaping, shopping centres and even cars and boats, clearly reflecting the city as a stage set for life or as some have sardonically commented, the city is a big theme park.

Tourism as a Generator of Urban Expression

The third and perhaps strongest generator of the urban expression of the Gold Coast is its economic base of tourism. From its founding in 1874 as a resort town, the Gold Coast has seen itself as a place where the more conventional standards are set aside in favour of holiday experiences in a themed expression.

Distillation of this artificial expression is found in the theme parks, which are as much an icon of the Gold Coast as the tall apartment buildings that front the beach. The theme parks exist in the city in a natural and easy relationship with the urban activity and image of the city. While some may argue that they exist by virtue of the tourist population, which makes up something in the order of 20% of the total population in the city at any given time, they co-exist with the themed environments of shopping centres, and housing estates which characterise much of the city. Fantasy for its own sake is only one step removed from fantasy as lifestyle for visitors and residents.

Numerous writers have explored the issue of place names as a key to the cultural landscape. O'Hare (1998:63) explains that some names have established a holiday aura because of their long association with tourism, for example Miami and Monterey in the United States. He points to the naming of Surfers Paradise as a clear indication that the leisure industry is a key economic and cultural activity of the Gold Coast, while the regional names of the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast highlight the climatic attributes of these destinations. The Gold Coast is sprinkled with appropriated place names such as Southport, Monterey Keys, Isle of Capri, and Miami Waters to name just a few. While these have been adopted essentially as real estate marketing tools, it is fair to suggest that the names are imbued with holiday and lifestyle aspirations or at least a sense of fantasy that the names suggest.

2.2.7 History of Planning

Despite its reputation as a city in which planning and development control has played a minor part, planning at the Gold Coast dates back over many decades. Strategic planning, the acknowledgment of image and direction in the shaping of community has been an essential part of the city's planning process since the earliest documentation.

While strategic statements as stand alone documents did not occur until 1982, as early as 1953, the South Coast Planning Scheme acknowledged the impending growth and introduced zoning to allow for multiple unit buildings amongst other uses and indeed introduced height controls throughout those zones to focus development in strategic nodes along the coastal strip.

Even at this time, the pressure on the city to create an image that stepped beyond more conventional cities was apparent. Buildings such as Kinkabool, the Gold Coast's first high rise

at ten storeys was constructed in 1960 in the heart of Surfers Paradise, with others soon following.

The Planning Scheme of 1963, similarly had a series of zones but by now, the pressure for tall buildings was such that despite notional height controls, with Council consent, the sky was the limit.

There was little cognisance of the fragility of the natural environment or the efficiency of infrastructure, but within this fairly basic zoning plan, a clear image of the city was emerging.

The 1982 Plan acknowledged the real future of the city as a tourist and entertainment centre, supported by an infrastructure of residential, business and light industrial activity. This plan also introduced provisions on design elements such as height, site coverage, plot ratio and setbacks, which are composed to effect the characteristic tall buildings in landscaped grounds.

Architectural historian Philip Goad, (1997:38) has described the Gold Coast as:

“Manhattan by the Sea” but it is in fact quite different. Planning has required space between the tall buildings to protect views and ground level amenity. The tall buildings at the Gold Coast are more related to Greek windmills spread along the beachfront, than to any cluster of commercial towers in Manhattan or indeed Australian capitals.

The 1982 Plan also reinforced the characteristic ‘strip’ with the introduction of Highway Development Zones which facilitated commercial infill along the main road network.

The 1994 Plan was more sophisticated and had as its strategic objective the acknowledgment of images including ‘City of Leisure’, and ‘City of Towers’. Recognising the need to maintain and enhance the image of the city and the various elements which contribute to it, the plan created Development Control Plans in 14 areas which provided bonuses for private developers in exchange for contributions to streetscaping and landscaping in the public realm that accorded with urban design guidelines. The plan also introduced controls on matters such as design of roof top plant rooms, facade profiles and finishes, in recognition of the city’s image as one seen in the round. In general, however, aesthetic controls were limited in recognition of the high rise building as an icon of symbolic value in which the detail was largely irrelevant.

The adjacent Albert Shire had the unenviable task of dealing with the growth of the Gold Coast City as it overflowed into what was, until the 1960s, an essentially rural shire. Some of the early canal estates were located in Albert Shire and the Planning Scheme of 1973 responsibly introduced the concept of a residential corridor between Brisbane and the Gold Coast, and conservation of wetlands, mountain and rural areas, which continues today.

The theme park strip along the Pacific Highway, and major integrated developments such as Sanctuary Cove were inevitable outcomes of the Gold Coast’s image and style, extending into available hinterland.

Following amalgamation of the two Councils in 1995, there was a natural pause and consideration of how the two plans might sensibly come together under a single administration and a new plan has been under preparation in years since. The plan in its present draft² form titled ‘Living City – Gold Coast Planning Scheme’ with its principal theme of ‘Towards Ecological Sustainability’ acknowledges the principal components of the city’s structure as:

- (a) The linear urban area along the Pacific Ocean and Broadwater coast from Coolangatta to Paradise Point.
- (b) The extensive suburban area to the west of the coastal strip, generally between the Gold Coast Highway and Pacific Motorway.
- (c) The hinterland areas.
- (d) The newly developing Albert Corridor extending from Gaven/Helensvale to Yatala.
- (e) The Beenleigh urban area.
- (f) The canelands.
- (g) The islands and estuaries of southern Moreton Bay, including South Stradbroke Island and the Broadwater.

It carries forward many of the planning concepts in former schemes and seeks to achieve a balance between ecological, economic and social considerations for sustainability of the city as a whole as expressed in the following table of Desired Environmental Outcomes.

Table 1 - Desired Environmental Outcomes - Gold Coast Planning Scheme (Draft)

Ecological Processes (biodiversity and landscape values)	Community Wellbeing (local character and identity)	Economic Development (economic growth and diversification)
<p>DEO Ecol-1 The conservation of areas containing significant native vegetation to ensure maintenance of the city’s biodiversity and natural landscape values.</p>	<p>DEO Soc-1 The establishment, conservation and enhancement of local character and the promotion of a distinctive local identity and sense of place for the various communities of the Gold Coast.</p>	<p>DEO Econ-1 The provision of an efficient land use pattern that is conducive to business activity, and attractive for new business opportunities, particularly those that complement existing or emerging business activity and those that offer opportunities for sustainable new businesses, which diversify the existing economic base of the city.</p>

² In October 2001, the State government approved the draft planning scheme to be formally placed on public display for a period of 3 months.

Ecological Processes	Community Wellbeing	Economic Development
(water quality) DEO Ecol-2 The protection of natural drainage catchments, river systems and other waterbodies to maintain the health of the ecosystems and human communities that they support, and to enhance their value for recreation and other uses.	(access to community facilities and employment) DEO Soc-2 The location and design of residential areas and support facilities to maximise accessibility to community facilities and places of employment, and to maximise opportunities for community interaction.	(improved integration of business and residential activity) DEO Econ-2 Enhanced employment and investment opportunities through better integration of residential and business activity, whilst protecting the residential amenity.
(air quality) DEO Ecol-3 The maintenance of high standards of air quality, including minimising greenhouse gas emissions.	(housing choice) DEO Soc-3 The provision of a range of housing choice that is responsive to the changing demographic structure of the city's population.	(infrastructure provision) DEO Econ-3 The co-ordinated, efficient and environmentally sustainable provision of infrastructure for servicing existing and developing areas of the city to a standard that is responsive to the needs of the community and business sectors.
(waste management) DEO Ecol-4 The minimisation of waste products and the provision of efficient systems to ensure their effective treatment, disposal and, where possible, reuse.	(cultural heritage) DEO Soc-4 the identification and protection of places and objects of recognised cultural and heritage significance.	(activity centres and activity clusters) DEO Econ-4 The provision of a viable system of Activity Centres (based on service catchments) and Activity Clusters (based on the locational needs of productive business sectors).
	(residential amenity) DEO Soc-5 The maintenance of residential amenity through the minimisation of any environmental harm or adverse social impacts occurring from the construction and operation of commercial, community, tourism, industrial and extractive industry activities.	(tourism) DEO Econ-5 The enhancement of the tourism industry, including the protection of existing attractions and the city's significant natural assets, and the further diversification of the industry.
	(transport services) DEO Soc-6 The provision of a safe, clean and attractive transport system that efficiently connects the various parts of the city, and offers choice and convenience for residents and visitors.	(natural resources) DEO Econ-6 The prudent use of renewable and non-renewable natural resources, having regard to their sustainable management.
	(hazard mitigation) DEO Soc-7 The location and design of development to minimise the potential risk to life and property from known natural hazards.	

Considerably more sophisticated than previous versions, this new draft city plan establishes, 15 Key Strategies, 18 Landuse Themes, 18 Domains, 30 Local Area Plans, 40 Specific Development Codes, 16 Constraint Codes and 18 Incorporated Planning Scheme Policies.

Notably relevant to this research is the incorporation of planning and design objectives for dealing with 'Urban Heritage and Character' and 'City Image and Townscape' throughout the cascading hierarchy of strategies, land use themes, local area plans and codes. Key Strategies for Urban Heritage and Character and City Image and Townscape and their associated maps are included as Appendix 5.0. These have been strongly influenced by the Gold Coast Urban Heritage and Character Study that was adopted by the council in 1997. Further discussion about the findings and recommendation of that study are provided in Part 3.2.4.

This overview of the evolution of planning legislation at the Gold Coast demonstrates how planning has been both a reflection of politics and an influence on manifestation of the increasingly complex city we see today.

2.3 Historical Likenesses with East Coast Florida USA

While general comparisons of the Gold Coast with California for its lifestyle and self-created imagery, and with Las Vegas for its expressions of excess, are common and legitimate, more pertinent resemblances can be identified with the Florida's east coast.

Associated with their similar climatic, geographic, social and economic conditions, are striking historical and cultural likenesses between Florida and Australia's Gold Coast. This is especially true between South Beach, Miami and Surfers Paradise, and between Fort Lauderdale and the Gold Coast's distinctive canal estates. The topic is fascinating and warrants a complete study of its own that is beyond the scope of this research. This section provides only a brief insight into the similarities shared by the American and Antipodean versions of a national playground, to demonstrate historical and cultural derivatives.

While in most developing countries today it is commonplace for tourism to generate new territory, Florida and the Gold Coast, in their respective countries were the first places for this to occur. (Armbruster 1995, Jones 1999) Virtually uninhabited in the 19th century, both regions figured little in the national mindset of urban dwellers in the established cities based on primary or industrial production.

In the 1880s and 1890s, industrialist, Henry Flagler created the means of getting to Florida through extension of railways and then augmented the railways by building grand resort hotels, such as the Royal Poinciana in Palm Beach and the Royal Palm in Miami, for the rich tourists escaping the northern winters. In the same era in Queensland, the publicly funded railway from Brisbane to Southport and Coolangatta, established those places as resorts where urban dwellers could escape the stifling heat of Brisbane and Ipswich. As previously mentioned, magnificent

hotels by Australian standards, such as The Grand Hotel at Deepwater Point and The Pacific at Southport were built.

Mass resort development did not occur however, until the emergence of the motor car and entrepreneurs who comprehended the future changing lifestyles brought about by technology and liberalisation of social and economic strictures. Such entrepreneurs, possessed with incisive vision, and a flare for promotion and land speculation, are credited with spurring this new resort phenomenon.

In 1915, Fisher, an Indianapolis automobile baron, who recognised the real estate potential of Miami Beach, a spit of ‘daunting swampland’, began dredging and filling, to transform it into a boomtown. Fisher had begun his entrepreneurial career with a bicycle repair shop at the beginning of the bicycle craze in America and then was successful as a car dealer in the early 1900s. He conducted outrageous stunts to promote his bicycles and motor cars. He was a champion for highway development, anticipating the emergence of the ‘family automobile’ and following the First World War people “were eager to play and see new things. A kind of travel fever came over the country, and Fisher was right there to help steer Americans to Florida.” By the 1920s Fisher’s Miami exploded into a resort phenomenon not seen before in the United States. Armbruster describes Fisher as a “businessman-adman-showman extraordinaire. His flamboyant personality and appetite for excitement set the style and pace for Miami Beach and its later developers.” (1995:27)

Had there been no Carl Fisher, Florida would be known today as just the Turpentine State... Carl drained off the water-moccasins, the blacks, and the Turpentine, and replaced them with a Hotel and New York prices. He put in a Jazz Orchestra and one-way Excursions; advertised free heat the year ‘round; fixed up the chugholes so the Fords could get in; rehearsed the mosquitos ‘till they wouldn’t bite you until after you had bought... (Armbruster 1995:15)

At the Gold Coast, access by motor car to places between Southport and Coolangatta was not easy until the bridging of the rivers was completed in the mid 1930s. Economic conditions and the Second World War, suppressed resort development until a new affluence emerged in the 1950s and 1960s to mirror not only what had happened in Miami in the 1920s and 1930s but also the new, post-war, auto-driven burst of speculative suburban residential development throughout the east coast of Florida.

Amongst entrepreneurs responsible for accelerating the momentum and popularity of the Gold Coast as a resort destination, Bruce Small stands out. Like Miami’s Fisher, Small, began business in the bicycle trade, establishing the Malvern Star bicycle business in Melbourne. It is fair to presume that the appearance of regular, bold advertisements for Malvern Star bicycles on the front page of the South Coast Bulletin in 1949 (see Appendices 3.11.1 and 3.11.2), was a

result of Small's belief in the power of promotion and certainly contributed to the success of his business. Small 'retired' to the Coast after selling his bicycle business in 1958 and became involved in the creation of real estate through dredging and filling, with Isle of Capri in the 1960s and later the canal estates of Cypress Gardens and Bundall which he promoted as 'Paradise City'. Always a controversial figure, Small, like Miami's Fisher, was a businessman-adman-showman extraordinaire. He is perhaps best remembered for his role as Mayor in the late 1960s and 1970s when he led the famous bikini girl promotions, throughout Australia and to New Zealand and Japan, bringing massive publicity to the Gold Coast.

From the foundation of an equable climate, fabulous beaches and cheap, available 'mosquito infested swampland' these and many other developers set about creating 'paradise'. Armbruster explains that Fisher's development style was slap-dash. He did the minimum necessary; filled the land, provided power, water, and streets in a grid-style pattern. Exotic landscaping bougainvillea, orchid trees, poinciana, hibiscus, oleanders, coconut trees, royal palms and Australian pines, reminiscent of pacific island paradises, were planted to transform the landscape into a "man-built paradise", (1995:13) which he sold generally from blueprints, to northern investors and "then left it to grow into itself"(1995:25). Rizzoli (1981:7) claims that "Born out of fantasy and speculation, designed for fun and profit, Miami Beach, from its inception has been a city of mythical composition". The same is true of the Gold Coast.

Away from the beach on Miami's west side in the 1920s and 1930s, even more excessive and fanciful imagery was being crafted to sell the real estate at a distance (Dunlop 1998:191). George Merrick was building the masterplanned community of Coral Gables; a Mediterranean-themed, middle-class, utopia based on the City Beautiful movement. Fake historicism lent an air of romance and grandeur to the brash new Florida frontier.

Exteriors were aged by applying 3 or 4 coats of different coloured paint, allowing the base colours to show through. Chimneys were contrived to look as if the stucco had crumbled off with age. Floors were made of 'age-enriched' Spanish tiles. (Armbruster 1995:35)

The Gold Coast has similarly experienced the composition of fantasy through exotic landscaping and this has extended in recent decades to application of evocative imagery through neo-historicism in the built environment, particularly in resort housing complexes as Adelphi Springs in Ashmore or Chamonix at Nobbys, and estates such as The Dales at Robina.

Both Florida and the Gold Coast were quick to take advantage of publicity opportunities that came with the advent of television. In the 1960s, Miami Beach was plugged as Vacationland USA and it gained massive publicity through hosting the Jackie Gleason Show.

Every Sunday night 40 million people watched his program, which opened with the best unpaid advertisement in the world, an aerial view of the glittering Gold Coast, “the sun and fun capital of the world”. (Armbruster 1995:152)

Even before the Gold Coast received television reception, events staged at the Gold Coast such as the International Airline Hostess Quest, were broadcast to other parts of Australia. In more recent years, the filming of *Miami Vice* led to an increased profile and new popularity for Miami. The Gold Coast too has sought to attract film and television with series such as *Paradise Beach*, which have been less successful.

Alongside the emanation of hype and fantasy, these ‘national playgrounds’ have constantly experienced criticism as places of ‘phoney pretensions and flimsy character’ (Armbruster 1995:33). Their resort cultures have been denigrated for lacking substance. While such negative criticism is generally dismissed, it gains resonance in times of flagging popularity. The 1970s and early 1980s were bad years for Miami.

On top of everything else, the materialistic lifestyle that Miami Beach was designed to celebrate had simply gone out of fashion. Sometimes it seemed like Miami Beach was glitz’s last refuge. (Armbruster 1995:168)

In addition, Miami Beach became regarded as a geriatrics paradise as many of the small apartment buildings turned into retirement hotels to accommodate the significant aged population. Newness, the beach’s lifeblood was in short supply. Stories of dodgy real estate scams, gangsters and crime presented imagery of a violent drug-crazed city. Legalised gambling was pushed as a panacea to the resort’s decline but referenda were defeated. Similar scenarios have reverberated at the Gold Coast (except, after many years of resistance, the government did legalise gambling and the Gold Coast did get a casino in 1986).

There are many more remarkable parallels, including:

- Both were used in the 1940s by the US military. Miami Beach was invaded as a boot camp and parts of the Gold Coast were adopted as recreation sites for US soldiers.
- Both have attracted significant Jewish populations. Many Jewish people settled in Miami following World War Two. In the 1960s, a large contingent of southern holidaymakers, many of whom settled in Surfers Paradise, were Jewish people from Melbourne.
- Both were boosted by jet travel, but also suffered as jet travel made other destinations as quickly and easily accessible. In the US, “many preferred the unspoiled Carribean or the prestige of a European vacation” (Armbruster 1995:68). In Australia comparable alternatives emerged.
- Both were early to recognise the need for, and implement packaging of air travel and accommodation to capture market share in the face of increasing competition.

- In both, major self-contained resort hotels with shopping lobbies, dining and leisure facilities were established. These offered packages for accommodation, meals and entertainment so that the tourist never needed to leave the resort, thus leading to the demise of many smaller independent establishments.
- Both have accommodated themed resort hotels developed on the premise that “a catchy name and a few decorative touches went a long way toward capturing the tourist’s attention and stimulating his or her escapist fantasies” (Armbruster 1995:141).
- Both have pursued conventions markets to increase business.
- Both recognise the attraction and value of their beaches and have undertaken enormous replenishment and maintenance programs to counteract diminution of the asset.
- Both contain extensive residential canal systems.
- Both are flush with theme parks.
- Florida is commonly regarded as “the state where everyone is from somewhere else” (Eyewitness Travel Guide 1997:18). The same is frequently said of the Gold Coast.

Of course there are also differences between the American and antipodean Gold Coasts. For example, Australia’s Gold Coast does not have a Cuban refugee population and Spanish influences. It does not have a port that is deep enough for a cruise liner terminal (not for want of trying) or a distinctive architectural aesthetic such as art deco, which has been revived in Miami and used as the foundation for the city’s revitalisation (Capitman 1988:16).

The most pertinent similarity however, is that both cities represent new urban phenomena that, unlike traditional cities, are founded on resort and recreation.

3.0 POSITIONING THE RESEARCH IN THEORY & PRACTICE

The study of cultural landscapes lies predominantly within the theoretical realms of cultural geography, landscape architecture, and urban planning, design and conservation. There have been a number of shifts in the conceptualisation of landscapes and cities as phenomena for study, and also in the way that methodologies and techniques are applied in practice.

This chapter explores areas of theory and practice that are pertinent to the cultural landscape of the Gold Coast, which is the result of predominant resort and sun-belt urbanism. It applies emphasis on the qualitative theoretical sphere of ‘sense of place’, raising critical and interpretative issues and developing a conceptual position for interpretation of the cultural landscape through which the research questions can be answered.

3.1 Cultural Landscape Concepts & Practice

3.1.1 Fascination with the Visual Landscape

The early discipline of geography was founded on the basis of visual representation of the world expressed through description and mapping of landscapes and townscapes that largely confine sensual experience to visually encoded features, which were then organised or reduced and synthesised into a meaningful whole. Urry (1999:71) maintains that:

there is a fascination with the sense of sight as the apparent mirror of the world, and more generally with the “hegemony of vision” that has characterised Western social thought and culture over the past few centuries.

In the late 19th century, out of discontent for this fascination with mapping the physical landscape as the prevailing means of interpretation, grew an increasing recognition of the role that culture plays in creation of landscapes and inquiry into new ways for landscape interpretation.

Notably, the ‘pays’ school in France, established by Paul Vidal de la Blach, was interpreting distinctions in human activity and culture as a response to their respective geomorphological regions. European thought at this time regarded cultural landscapes as “physical representations of public history awaiting interpretation” (Armstrong 2001).

Extension of these studies on sense of place occurred in the 1920s through Carl Sauer and his American followers who viewed cultural landscapes as “representations of the activities and aspirations of cultural groups.” (Sauer 1925)

Mapping as the only means of recording cultural expression and aspirations proved problematic and in subsequent decades a practice of ‘reading’ the landscape through critical observation developed. Cultural landscape analysis increasingly focused on the way human activity imbued landscapes with a sense of place as demonstrated in the writings of Alexander; JB Jackson and Wagner & Mikesell. (Armstrong 2001)

3.1.2 Heritage Interpretations of Landscapes

In the 1970s, through the particular influence of Lowenthal, discussions about place and cultural landscapes shifted into the realm of values rather than mere descriptions of the ways cultural practices have shaped landscapes. Lowenthal (1985) and many others since, have expounded on the human search for meanings about place through history and memory, exploring various methodologies and depths of understanding about engagement with both vernacular and iconographic landscapes. Sense of place is rooted in the past and often in the ‘physical’, and this notion has been central to the realms of heritage theory and heritage conservation practice which have mushroomed, particularly throughout the Western world in recent decades. In Australia until very recently, landscape interpretation has generally been confined to the practice of scenic evaluations and methods of identifying and conserving heritage significance. (Armstrong 2000, 2001)

3.1.3 Landscape as Text

Of particular relevance to this research project is the work of Relph (1976) who observed that the values people attribute to places are related to their level of empathy with such places. More recently Cosgrove and Daniels (1988) have explored the symbolic context of cultural landscapes focusing on iconographic significance.

Post-modern theories, particularly Post Structuralism allowed landscapes to be read as ‘texts’. Pottleiger and Purinton (1998) have explored narrating landscapes through tropes, metaphors, metonymy, synecdoche, irony and story-telling to uncover the many complex connections, meanings and values.

Reading landscape as texts gives rise to the potential for use of a well established interpretative method, namely, hermeneutics. In cultural studies, hermeneutics, the study of interpretations, was appropriated by post-modern theorists who used literary studies to open up different ways of place interpretation. The key appeal of hermeneutics for cultural landscape interpretation is that it accommodates the existence of multiple meanings and values.

In Australia, Armstrong has pioneered the use of hermeneutics to interpret urban landscapes in her work on multicultural urban landscapes and migrant places, derived from structured conversations with migrant groups (Armstrong: 2000). Extending from this research, she has contended that because hermeneutic studies allow for multiple meanings it is inevitable that the meanings will be contested when proposals for the management of cultural landscapes are put forward.

Recent work by Armstrong and others (2001) within the Cultural Landscape Research Unit at Queensland University of Technology has been looking at the nature of contested values and ways to develop a field in which values can be negotiated. The study, *Contested Terrains; Investigating Queensland's Cultural Landscapes*, has developed a methodology for interpreting multiple values embedded in the landscape and recognises that “many values can be held concurrently by one person or a group.” It goes beyond identifying visual and heritage values by applying a theory based on various ‘world views’ to read the landscape. It entails a case study on the Gold Coast has been valuable in identifying contested values at a regional scale.

3.1.4 Reading the Invisible Landscapes

The focus of this study is more intricate – it is founded on the views of the residents and visitors to the city expressed as text through the city’s single daily newspaper which as former Premier Rob Borbidge has said “mirrors the place we call home and this great city we are still building.” (Gold Coast Bulletin 22 March 2000)

Through slices of time, it extracts the hopes, achievements, aspirations, follies and failures of the community and presents these from multiple perspectives in the form of landscape readings or narratives. This method does not deny the complementary value of conventional physical assessments and methodologies. Instead it incorporates a conventional physical reading of the landscape, while simultaneously exploring landscape readings from economic, social and political perspectives. The various layers reveal changes over time both as physical evidence but also as changing values and meanings related to the landscape.

The post-modernity embedded in the Post Structuralist approach to interpretation is appropriate to a city like the Gold Coast. Symes (1997:31) has described the Gold Coast as “the first and most dramatic example of a post-modern city in Australia.” While the totality of this claim is arguable, it is certainly a city that embodies many post-modern attitudes.

From the outset, newspaper data analysis revealed that within the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, there has always been more discussion about the economic, political and social issues than physical or aesthetic issues. Yet perception, appreciation, interpretation or indeed denigration of the cultural landscape, is almost exclusively attuned to the physical landscape that we can see.

It was considered fair to draw the assumption that at the Gold Coast, where the physical form and expression are unconventional, only inquisitive minds develop a rounded consciousness of the cultural landscape that includes the 'invisible' economic, social and political landscapes. The difficulty of being able to 'read' the landscape, in more than a physical sense, restricts people in gaining more than a superficial understanding of the cultural landscape. Indeed a common interpretation is that the Gold Coast is superficial or shallow, and this anecdotal lack of culture and depth is the main cause of derision of this particular cultural landscape.

This is a primary concern for the Gold Coast where the question of taste, which is always just below the surface in cultural matters, influences its image and dictates its appeal to tourists; the city's key source of wealth. Yet if these often invisible and misunderstood economic, political and social landscapes can be interpreted, the visible landscape is given new validity.

Although most people generally understand the term 'cultural landscape', there are numerous definitions that attempt to describe its meaning precisely. This research adopts a recent definition by Armstrong and O'Hare (1999) with minor adaptation, as shown by under-lining below, to allow for these so-called 'invisible landscapes'.

The cultural landscape is constantly evolving, humanised, landscape. It consists of a dialectic between the natural physical setting, the human modifications to that setting, and the meanings of the resulting landscape to insiders and outsiders. Continuous interaction between these three elements takes place over time. Cultural landscapes need not be visible to the eye. They can be represented as stories, myths, beliefs and values, which may be applied to all landscapes including wilderness landscapes, ordinary landscapes or designed landscapes. The concept of cultural landscape therefore embodies a dynamic understanding of history, in which past, present and future are seamlessly connected.

3.1.5 Inconsistencies in Cultural Landscape Values

While the theoretical position of cultural landscapes validates their importance alongside natural or wilderness landscapes, cultural landscape values seem to be less easy to sustain because of the complexities and contradictions that they hold. Wilderness landscapes are defended by the wider community, as evidenced by the power and influence of the 'natural heritage lobby'.

An obvious example of this contest at the Gold Coast is in the on-going dispute about exotic, resort style landscaping. The natural heritage lobby fails to recognise the cultural significance of appropriate use of these exotic species in the context of the city's cultural landscape. In particular, they have been pushing for eradication of palm species, which are a potent symbol of the resort-style landscape, in favour of the natural and rural vegetation typologies. In contrast, others believe that eradicating the 'palm' from the landscape would be like ripping the very heart out of paradise. (Graham 1999)

This confirms that the challenge in sustaining cultural landscapes lies in developing ways to facilitate its interpretation and appreciation, so that such contested values can be debated and sensibly balanced.

3.2 Concepts of Planning & Design for Dynamic Coastal Tourist Cities

Within the changing natures of contemporary cities, there is mounting concern about loss of 'sense of place' which is generally attributed to changes in the physical environment.

Corresponding with the shifts in conceptualisation of the cultural landscape towards interpreting meanings and values, urban planners, designers, planners and theorists have become obsessed with a search for meaning in urban places. This has typically manifested in some form of 'townscape' study that assesses the aesthetic qualities and/or heritage significance of places, although in recent years wider understandings and management practices have been developing.

3.2.1 Normative Understandings of Cities

In *A Timeless Way of Building*, Christopher Alexander with a small group of associates at the University of California at Berkeley, developed a manifesto based on the belief that "the life and soul of a place depend not simply on the physical environment, but on the patterns of events which we experience there" (1979:62). The same authors provided a vocabulary for a process of incremental change in *A Pattern Language* (1977), which articulates 253 patterns, based on psychological human needs that recur in the environment. This work, however, is not cognisant of the complexity of the current and changing realities of planning and political systems. Although useful for critical analysis, empirical application of the philosophy is difficult and the work has not figured strongly in mainstream theory and practice. Instead, a general fixation on the physical environment has prevailed in mainstream urban polemics.

Melbourne architect Carey Lyons spoke, at the CityEdge2 conference in April 2001, about changing city forms. He suggested that:

the industrial city and its geography was particularly physical and visceral, full of steel rails, hissing steam, industrialised fabrication, and other tangible processes where the technology and the industrial product were largely inseparable. This sheer physicality gave architects and urbanists a physical substance in which to think and delineate an aesthetic for the industrial city. But even this familiar cityscape would have been regarded as a perversion of the earlier pre-industrial, classical or renaissance urban form, and it too only gradually came to be regarded as normative.

We have grown up within the paradigm of understanding the socio-political order of industrial cities, which exhibit a concentrated rail-oriented central core and codified characteristics in

terms of land use and transport patterns and even siting, forms and styles of buildings, particularly those which are public or institutional in nature.

3.2.2 Spontaneous Expression as a City

The Gold Coast, much regarded as a perversion of the conventional socio-political order of cities, will never possess the familiar form and characteristics of the 19th century city. Its substance is unique and to be able to read the city we need to understand what has generated that difference.

What happened at the Gold Coast from the mid 1950s was spontaneous and dramatically unconventional. The city's growth was uninhibited by the constraints of 19th century form and infrastructure and social convention. As explained in Chapter 2.2.5, it is a logical result of its geography, transport, and a culture and economy based on leisure. It is, in this respect, a truly modern city in which, as Mies Van der Rohe required of architects, "form follows function".

Being a modern city, one might have expected it to take a masterplanned and austere form like Canberra or Brasilia, but instead it took a form that was seen as haphazard, artificial, and superficial (Jones 1999).

Canberra, despite being a new city, was constrained and dictated by planning principles firmly rooted in the 19th century. By contrast, the Gold Coast followed the general worldwide post-war denial of cities, and developed closer relations to suburbanism.

As a resort city, it was also culturally and politically unfettered by convention. Coupled with an equable climate, it offered fantasy and desirability as a holiday destination and it offered a lifestyle different to what people experienced in conventional cities. Lifestyle attractiveness was pitched as an extension of the holiday fantasy imbued with the enticement that you do not have to wait for holidays you can have it now, 'Live the Dream!'

While still contained within broad modern systems that dictate the functioning of cities, the Gold Coast's rejection of structural modernism and liberal cultural framework support Symes' description of it as post-modern (1997:31).

3.2.3 Coming to Grips with the Post-Industrial Cities

The Gold Coast has been much criticised as an un-planned and unruly and superficial city. It has been popular to draw comparisons between the Gold Coast and American sun-belt metropolises in Southern California and Florida. Since the 1960s there has been polemic debate about the failings of contemporary urban places generally, but the attention to US sun-belts has been particularly intensive. Such writings, while not appropriate for direct correlation with the

Gold Coast, are beneficial to understanding the unique theoretical realm within which the city is positioned.

In *Learning from Las Vegas*, Venturi, Scott-Brown Izenour (1972) identified the city as a “pleasure zone” in which lightness and heightened symbolism were qualities to be appreciated. This is in contrast to theoretical positions which have been more critical of the changing natures of cities.

Kunstler, in *A Geography of Nowhere*, expressed discontentment about the suburban sprawl which spawned in post-war landscapes due to the proliferation of private automobile ownership. He described this form of urbanism as soulless and coma-inducing, and he blamed the “extreme individualism of property ownership” for degradation of the idea of the public realm, and hence of the landscape tissue. (1993:26)

Davis, in *City of Quartz*, described sun-belt landscapes as “Utopian Antipodes”. He scorned the eutopic logic of housing subdivisions in southern California as “sterilised sites, stripped bare of nature and history, masterplanned only for privatised family consumption” (1990:6), and he raised concern about the disappearance of culture through the dominance of simulated expression within the built environment. Disparaging of Californian developers, Davis said:

Now they have brought back France (or rather California homes in French drag) to the desert in fortified mini-banlieus, with lush lawns, Old World shrubs, fake mansard roofs and nouveaux riches titles like ‘Chateau’.

In the *The 100 Mile City*, Sudjic (1992) attempted to make sense of the forces shaping western cities and like Davis and Kunstler was especially critical of Los Angeles. Of particular relevance to the notion of ‘sense of place’ he noted that throughout history:

The belief in the idea of progress, with its equation of prosperity and prestige with change, was a powerful one. But when the outlook darkens, physical change starts to seem more threatening, and buildings identified with the past, whatever their intrinsic quality, are seen to offer a sense of continuity and stability. (1992:47)

French scholar Baudrillard, in his book described as a travelogue of *America* caused a stir with his insulting contentions about the extermination of meaning in landscapes dominated by the motor car and the disappearance of culture through the explosion of ‘simulacra’ in which there can be no references or meanings. Baudrillard (1988:76) wrote:

America ducks the question of its origins; it cultivates no origin or mythical authenticity; it has no past and no founding truth. Having known no primitive accumulation of time, it lives in perpetual present. Having seen no slow, centuries-long accumulation of a principle of truth, it lives in perpetual simulation, in a perpetual present of signs.

These are characteristics which many would identify and relate to the Gold Coast; self created images, expression of newness, and constant re-invention of itself. Baudrillard claimed to be

more observational than critical, later explaining: “I was not writing about reality – nor was I condemning the country - I loved the place - my critics are reading my book through the eyes of European nostalgia.” (1994:21)

Lynn Spiegel in her essay *From theatre to spaceship* in *Visions of Suburbia* (1997:221) points out that post-war suburbs were based on fantasy and imagery. An extreme example is the Kings Point Estate outside New York. The Home Section of the New York Times in 1949 mentioned how architects incorporated “many of the features of the homes of Hollywood stars ... in a colony of theatrical and ranch style residences.” Similarly, it could be argued that the new Federation or Colonial themed estates, so common in Australian cities are theatrical stagings. At the Gold Coast the special sense of fantasy that Hollywood and later television promoted was allowed free reign. It is expressed in themed estates like the Sovereign Islands and Somerset Place, in building facades like Belle Maison and The Phoenician and even place names such as Florida Gardens or Monterey Keys.

Berman, author of *All That is Solid Melts into Air* (1988) inferred that authenticity is a product of and related to self-knowledge. Allom and Jones (1997) have argued that amongst the Gold Coast’s unconventional urban structure, there is clear expression of its lifestyle, in its image, and indeed in its evolving and constantly changing form, and in this sense it is a city that ‘knows itself’. Far from being a vulgar counterfeit, it is amongst the more authentic of Australian cities in its alliance with popular taste within the changing paradigm of the city.

Colin Symes in his essay *Strange Alchemy: the Gold Coast as a Cultural Phenomenon*, (1997:31) has said:

It is a city where the spurious has been turned into an art form, and urban design subjected to the principles of the theme park. This should be celebrated as the quintessence of the Gold Coast.

There is however, resistance of such views amongst traditionalists and those who fail to see the authenticity of these changing city forms and expressions.

Many writers have been speculating about simulation, thematic expression, disrupted meanings and the construction of spectacle and imagery in cities. Much influence is attributed the theme-park urbanism created by Disney (Sorkin, 1992; Zukin, 1995; Huxtable, 1997; Hannigan, 1998) which is the crystallisation of the idea of place consumption. However, most remain uncomfortable with these phenomena and when drawing conclusions they do not maintain wholehearted support of this new form of spontaneous city, instead longing for the centred city model, in which meaning has evolved over nearly 2000 years.

In a recently published novel titled *England England* (Barnes 1998:55), which is essentially about heritage representations and tourism, the main character professes:

... we live in the world of the spectacle, but sentimentalism and a certain political recidivism made him fear his own vision. ...once there was only the world directly lived. Now there is representation - let me fracture that word, the re-presentation of the world. It is not a substitute for that plain and primitive world, but an enhancement and enrichment, an ironisation and summation of that world. This is where we live today. A monochrome world has become Technicolor, a single croaking speaker has become wraparound sound. Is this out loss? No, it is our conquest, our victory.

Similarly positive speculations are suggesting that cities will increasingly take on new forms and meanings and in this respect, as Allom & Jones (1997) have previously suggested, the Gold Coast, rather than being the antithesis of good urban form and expression, is worthy of study as a representation of new city form. Such affirmative interpretations are typically received with suspicion as evidenced in the following excerpt from an article in Brisbane's *Courier Mail* 27 March 1999, titled '*Gold and Glitzy, fast and loose: Does the Gold Coast really exist, or is it just a man-made fantasy?*'

Allom is one of a growing band of architects, planners and observers mounting the unlikely argument that the Gold Coast – far from being a kitsch, haphazard and embarrassing blight on the landscape – is actually a model of design envied by others and a city Australians will always be drawn to. Modern cities, he believes are no longer just places of production and exchange, but places of entertainment. In that way, the Gold Coast has a '100 year jump on everyone else. The Gold Coast is one big theme park,' Allom says fondly, 'and it does it very well. Yes, it has a history based on tourism, but its attitude to it is post-modern – the idea is to have the history and the future wrapped in one parcel'.

From the late 1990s, there has been increasing acceptance that we are moving into a strange new paradigm: an age where space and identity are being redefined with advances in communication technology and a shift towards the informational mode of production. Although there has been an element of concern that these new systems which are anti-spatial will compound a sense of placelessness and cities may even become obsolete, current polemical debate is more focused on how we can embrace the 'New Geographies' as a rearrangement of the 'ingredients' of cities systems and networks that sustain modern life. (Pawley, 1997; Mitchell, 1994 & 1999; Kotkin, 2000)

Mitchell, in his book *City of Bits* claims that that "if we understand what is happening, and if we can conceive and explore alternative futures, we can find opportunities to intervene, sometimes to resist, to organise, to legislate, to plan and to design." (1998:5)

Carey Lyons (2001) has proposed that the opposite is true of this notion of placelessness. He maintains that we are becoming more sophisticated consumers of the idea of "place" and that commodification of place is likely to be a key attribute in the creation of these new cities.

3.2.4 Heritage Interpretations of Cities

While these debates have been going on, and the periphery of cities have experienced rapid suburban development, the reactionary movement of heritage conservation has grown in response to diminishing sense of place. While not independent of the ideas discussed in the previous section, a specific overview of the realm of heritage interpretation is covered here as another dimension to the understanding of 'sense of place'.

Post-war western society recognised the loss of the core identity of cities in Europe through bombing, and in the United States, 'downtown' areas, seen as slums, were cleared, erasing much of their 19th century forms.

Disappearance of these physical connections with the past caused a sense of loss of identity and generated a whole new area of theory and practice fixated with conserving heritage to maintain that historical connection. An abundance of charters and guidelines for heritage assessment and management have been developed worldwide (Pearson & Sullivan, 1995; Allom 1998). These generally command a process of recording, categorising and listing objects, buildings, streetscapes and in some cases whole townscapes, which are considered to have heritage significance, and protection through some form of regulatory mechanism to conserve it as it existed at a determined point in time, essentially as a reminder of history.

Australian cities did not experience such drastic change as did war-time Europe or the downtowns in North America, although demolition of 19th century housing close to city centres for flat building in the 1960s sparked the emergence of a heritage conservation movement which did not really get into full swing until the late 1970s and 1980s. Since the mid 1980s however, in almost a frenzy, an extensive heritage industry has grown, with professional and community organisations, and become central to town planning.

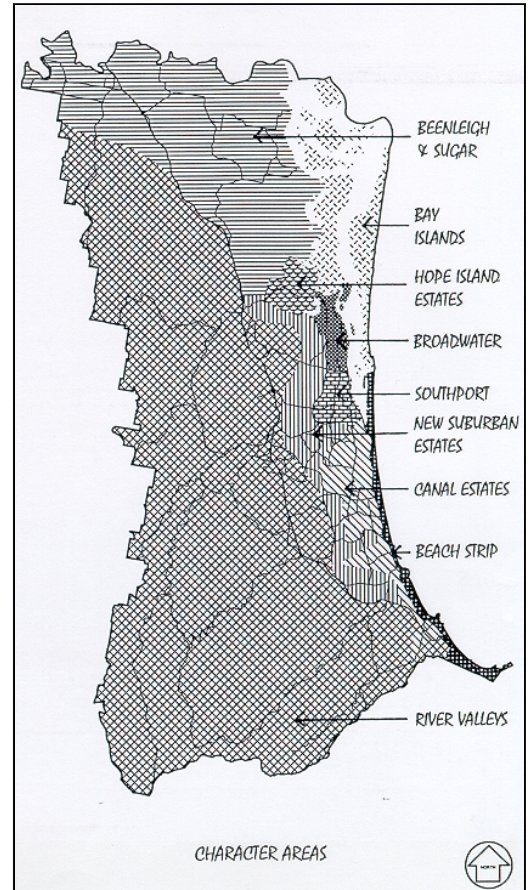
Queensland has lagged behind the southern states and had a history, until recently, of resistance to conservation of both natural and cultural heritage. The first Heritage Act to protect places of cultural significance was not introduced until 1991.

At the Gold Coast, until recent years, the term 'heritage' colloquially and in legislation was only applied to natural landscapes. The city's progressive, forward-looking culture rarely looked to its history as a source of enrichment and meaning. The 1994 City of Gold Coast Planning Scheme introduced the issue of 'City Character' as a key attribute to protect but it was not until *Building Sustainable Communities*, Gold Coast City Council's draft Strategic Plan was released for public exhibition in September 1997, that the issues of 'City Image, Heritage and Character' were promulgated as major strategic issues for the city.

The 1997 Strategic Plan followed the commissioning of the City's first Urban Heritage and Character Study in 1996. As part of its process of maturity, the Gold Coast was asking of itself "What is our heritage and how can that essential character that sets us apart from other places, be recognised, promoted and protected?"(Mayoral Foreword in Allom Lovell & others 1997)

Quite appropriately, that study was not approached in the conventional way of heritage interpretation. Not only did the authors have the benefit of knowing the shortfalls of the heritage movement in other cities, but it was clear from the beginning that a conventional approach to conservation could not be applied to a city with dominant post-modern mannerisms and in which a core aspect of the cultural landscape is change.

Rather, it established a new philosophy for understanding and a framework for management of the city's cultural heritage. The Study recommended a suite of twenty-one actions which should be implemented to conserve the Gold Coast's cultural heritage and protect the future character of the region and its distinctive parts. While most fall within the scope of the council's role, many also provide opportunities for community involvement in the way the city develops.



Gold Coast Urban Heritage & Character Study 1997, p54

The primary recommendation arriving from the Study was that the council should "embrace and promote the diversity of the heritage and character of the Gold Coast amongst its residents and visitors and look to ways of conserving that unique lifestyle, heritage and urban character. It should do so in a way that steps outside conventional town planning, urban design and heritage controls." (1997:34)

While this document offers insight to the significance of the city's unique cultural tradition and urban diversity, it identified the need for further studies and investigation to deepen our understanding of that significance. Additional studies recommended included:

- establishing a history program;
- preparing a cultural profile of the city;
- a specific study of the city's 20th century architectural history;
- graphical demonstration of the city's history of development; and,

- further analysis to develop better understanding of the interrelationship between the city's built and natural environments.

The Study also made numerous recommendations for council and community action to develop greater awareness of heritage and special character issues and to take action to protect and conserve those places. These included legislative mechanisms, but the focus was on proactive, non-regulatory means to raise awareness of heritage values and foster voluntary conservation.

This approach was well received, particularly as it was recognised that implementation of these recommendations would not radically change the way the planning system operates.

In 1998, the Council, with support of the EPA, appointed Richard Allom the principal author of the Study as Heritage Adviser and with council officers established a program for heritage and character conservation. The program gave equal time and effort to research and policy development, advice, and promotion and education.

The main thrust of promotional and educational initiatives was to celebrate aspects special to the Gold Coast. These were launched with art and photo exhibitions and guided walks, all of which resonated within the community and some nationally. For example the brochure '*Living High: An Architectural Guide to Tall Buildings of the Gold Coast*' and associated guided tours were reported in the *Australian Financial Review* and the *West Australian Times*.

It is fair to credit the program with forming the basis for a shift in perceptions about the Gold Coast, particularly within the academic and professional fields of planning, design and cultural studies. There has been an evident increase in studies focusing of the unique aspects of the city. More broadly, the council's program for heritage and character conservation has facilitated recognition that many different sectors of the council and community can be influential in managing and shaping the cultural landscape - it is not solely the interest and responsibility of town planners, architects and urban designers.

3.2.5 New Urbanism, Celebration & the Gold Coast's Crisis of Confidence

A full discussion about the Gold Coast and its themed environments needs to include mention of another reactionary contemporary movement which has emerged and gained popularity with urban planners and designers through the 1990s. Called New Urbanism or Neo-traditional town planning, its ideal is the creation of human habitats with small town qualities, based on a compact, human-scaled civic centre, where land uses are mixed and public transport is integrated, where pedestrians rule and harmony and good taste are adjudicated with regard to historic character. Published proponents of New Urbanism include Americans Calthorpe, Duany Plater-Zyberk and Katz.

While ostensibly this movement has its objectives in sustainability and human behaviour, there is undoubtedly a theme of nostalgia in the concept, looking back to times when life was slower, things were simpler and places grew and came alive organically over time.

It is understandable why this thinking has been adopted so willingly. Within the last several decades, the western world has seen an increasing privatisation of services and construction and a diminishing role and visible presence of government in cities which may equate with a loss of sense of place. Postal services are a good example. Post offices, once identifiable elements in any small town composition, are becoming redundant as their services are moving to less distinguishable shop front locations. People feel a sense of loss from such changes in urban landscape, many of which are subtle but collectively overtime reduce the sense of place.

Buoyed by the potency of the heritage movement and appropriating its objectives, New Urbanism is seen as a panacea to these changes. The urban qualities of many central locations in major cities are being improved through a renewal consistent with these neo-traditional planning principles. This is usually a result of bringing back or enhancing 'small town' qualities in defined or limited locations where the general fabric, human scale and local infrastructure is already in place - a legacy from pre-war or more precisely the pre-automobile era. These places exist as islands within broader city infrastructure in which these more human qualities are noticeably absent. In these isolated pockets, which fortuitously possess these qualities, planners are free to focus on the visual shaping of urban form and identity. In this, urban design initiatives such as Main Street Programs and Integrated Local Area Planning programs have had a close relationship with the development of New Urbanism in town planning.

New Urbanists' vision of authenticity, urban identity and a vital civic life predominantly draws on romantic images of European cities where maturity is the result of steady and incremental growth over many years, sometimes centuries. In the United States there has also been a

nostalgic small town movement, exemplified by Disneyland and Mainstreet programs. It is hard to visualise, even in the long term, that the rapidly developing suburban areas of Australian cities, with totally different infrastructure and forces, will ever achieve ideals espoused by the New Urbanism. While many of the New Urbanism principles are being promulgated in current practice in parts of these newer areas, it is difficult to implement them holistically. These places do not have the luxury of time needed to achieve identity and authenticity through age and organic growth and indeed do not have the underlying structure to accommodate it. Rather, they express identity through themes.

The new suburban expression in search of these neo-traditional qualities can be found in north American towns of Seaside and Celebration, and their Australian counterparts such as Forest Lakes in Brisbane and The Rifle Range in Melbourne. These places are, despite their village centres, no more than thematic outposts with their broader urban context.

The Gold Coast with the re-establishment of the railway line to Brisbane in 1996, had a perfect opportunity to develop some model, integrated transit-oriented centres but has failed to translate New Urbanist visions to centre development and activity around the railway stations. Many have asked why continued attempts to impose what is considered best planning practice, fail (Griffin 1999:235).

The Gold Coast has picked up New Urbanism in a subversive way. Resemblance of New Urbanism at the Gold Coast can be seen in estates superficially themed in Tuscan and Mediterranean styles, but these are not based on the principles of sustainability. They are a gated community version of New Urbanism that is absolutely reliant on the motor car. New Urbanism's ideal of creating a history of European villages that never existed, clashes with the Gold Coast's infrastructure and culture of tourism and change. People of the Gold Coast do not want new urbanism in a total sense. They want to maintain a sense of what Baudrillard describes as superficial, visually pleasant and stimulating without the limitations that New Urbanism demands.

For a city like the Gold Coast, New Urbanism is fanciful because it denies the contemporary condition. Nevertheless, the movement needs to be mentioned within the contextual theory and practice of urban design at the Gold Coast, mainly for its influence in undermining the confidence of planners, designers and developers who feel an expectation to pursue such ideals, which are unrealistic.

3.2.6 The Cultural Centrality of the Beach

As established in Part 2.2.5, the beach is the primary generator of the urban form of the Gold Coast and a potent symbol that pervades all aspects of the image and lifestyle of the city.

Lenek and Bosker in *The Beach: History of Paradise on Earth* (1998) have written about the evolution of the landscape of the beach from pre-history to the present, through ancient Grecian times and the Middle Ages when it was “an alien, inaccessible and hostile wilderness devoted to conquest” to Victorian times when bathing became popular for its healing qualities, to the 20th century where it became valued as a ‘recreation-oriented outpost of Western life.’

Other writers have written extensively about the origins of bathing resorts in the 18th century and the social life and customs that surrounded these places (Dutton, 1985; Croutier, 1992).

It is worth digressing briefly here to include mention of the origins of the tropical island paradise notions that are inextricably linked with beach culture.

Moorehead (1966:23) has described the idyllic landscape that Cook and his crew encountered in 1769 on their first visit to Pacific Island of Tahiti, marvelling at the tropical island with white sandy beaches, lush forests, coconut palm groves, jasmine, hibiscus, and frangipani, brightly coloured robes, beautiful women with smiling welcoming faces who anointed themselves with coconut oil. They were also amazed by the relaxed conditions, primal customs, promiscuity and liberal sexual rituals of the island people whom they described as uncivilised.

Out of these Pacific Island encounters grew the European fantasy of the ‘noble savage’ and through subsequent centuries, these notions have been mythologised and transplanted in beach resorts worldwide. Theroux, in his travelogue *The Happy Isles of Oceania* notes that “Because of its reputation for innocent sex, for pretty people in a pretty place, Tahiti has been one of the most inspirational pieces of geography in the world.” (1992:504)

Tropical fruits and vegetation, bright colours and sensuality have come to signify fantasy in the beach holiday, through ubiquitous manifestation in place names, decoration, landscaping, clothes and even food and beverages.

From a Queensland and Gold Coast perspective, Longhurst (1978, 1994, 1996, 1997, 1999) has written extensively about the vogue which emerged in the 1850s for city dwellers to escape to the sea.

The South Coast as a resort for Brisbanites became fashionable in the 1870s. In 1874, the site of a township was surveyed, adjacent to the placid waters of the Broadwater, and named Southport in obvious reference to the British seaside resort. Consistent with worldwide trends, magnificent ‘American style’ seaside hotels, were erected to accommodate visitors who came to enjoy sea bathing (Longhurst, 1994; Richards, 1994). Extension of the railway line from Brisbane to Southport in 1889 enabled people from Brisbane and Ipswich to enjoy cheap day trips to the Coast.

Initially sea-bathing was promoted for its health benefits, but it became increasingly popular as a recreational pursuit. This popularity prompted the need for bathing controls and by 1906 local government regulations allowed local councils to control swimming and swim-wear, nominating standards for bathing costumes, segregating bathing and defining bathing areas.

‘By 1911 surf bathing was all the craze’ on the open ocean beaches between Main Beach and Coolangatta and the surf life saving movement developed to patrol the beaches (Longhurst 1999:4).

A trestle bridge across the Broadwater was replaced by the Jubilee Bridge across the Nerang River Main Beach, was built in the 1920s improving access to the southern beaches and with improved roads and the growing availability of the motor car, Southport gradually lost its popularity as the premier destination for seaside recreation.

Custom became more relaxed toward bathing for recreation in public, and realising the possible financial benefits from holiday makers, councils in the 1930s provided public dressing sheds and bathing pavilions for use by the general public such as those which remain today at the terminus of Railway St Southport, and Main Beach (Richards 1994).

During the lean years post-World War 2, the popularity of seaside bathing swelled. It was a cheap and pleasurable diversion for gay abandon.

The bikini revolution exploded onto the world scene at the French Riviera in 1946. Bikinis were considered highly risqué. “Conceptually, if not literally, the bikini’s components resembled the black censoring stripes that appeared on pornographic pictures” to conceal the body’s erogenous zones. (Lenek and Bosker 1998:220-222)

In Surfers Paradise, fashion designer Paula Stafford began making these brief two-piece bathing costumes around 1949 (McRobbie 2001:184). Controversy erupted in 1952 when a young girl wearing one of Paula’s bikinis on the beach at Surfers Paradise was apparently ordered off the beach by the town’s beach inspector who considered it was too brief. Paula invited the mayor and aldermen to the beach the next day where she paraded six models in bikinis and asked for a judgement about whether her swimwear was indecent. McRobbie says that the aldermen sheepishly acknowledged that the bikinis were not too brief, giving “a kind of official imprimatur – and masses of publicity” (2001:185).

The issues of topless and nude bathing followed as source of constant controversy in the 1970s and 1980s and although neither have been officially legalised, topless bathing has become standard. Adult nudity is rarely seen at crowded beaches. Nor does it persist as a major issue of concern.

From the 1950s, in Australia, and the US as told by Lenek and Bosker (1998:156), “a beachside holiday came to be seen as an earmark of middle-class status... (people) flocked to the beach, not only to ogle, recreate, and strut, but to revel in an unprecedented liberalisation of morals.”

A holiday in Surfers Paradise certainly became an element of prestige, especially for Australians escaping cooler southern climates.

Lenek and Bosker (1998:xix) describe the beach as “nature’s most potent antidepressant” and a “site of spiritual renewal, regeneration, and the stockpiling of sun-warmed memories.”

The beach has become central to Australian leisure culture.

Ellis introduces his book *Life’s Still a Beach* (1998:3) saying, “I cannot imagine life without the beach... We take the beach for granted – it’s our birthright, a part of our collective consciousness and a site for the nurturing of our national identity.” He quotes Keith Dunstan *Herald-Sun Weekend* who wrote that “The essence of Oz is on the beach. We are perimeter people, we gravitate naturally to the sand” (1998:9) and Philip Adams of *The Weekend Australian* who wrote that “Given a million years, Australians may evolve into mermaids. At very least, we’ll have webbing twixt the toes” (1998:87).

The beach represents Australian social ideals of youth, sexuality and sensuality, fun, freedom and democracy. Enjoyment of the beach is a natural instinct. Blakemore, in his documentary film *Personal History of the Australian Surf* (1996 quoted in Ellis 1998:25) says, “Kids don’t need to be told what to do on a beach – they already know.”

Dutton (1985:55) writes of “a democracy of the body on the beach, an absence of shame.” People enjoy the beach without self-consciousness. Drewe (1997:14) suggests that an overwhelming reason why so many Australians regard the beach in a sensual and nostalgic light is where they first experienced sex.

Ellis quotes Damien Murphy of *The Bulletin* magazine who wrote that the beach “has been a place of display, where muscles and deeds and looks counted for all.” As an extension of the phenomenon of the beach as for parading and flaunting, perving which is generally frowned upon in civilised society, is considered a fun pastime and acceptable at the beach.

The Gold Coast Urban Heritage and Character Study 1997 says “Of all the elements of the Gold Coast, the beach is the most visible, dominant and enduring... providing an image of cleanliness, openness and lifestyle for tourists and residents alike.”

In the *Courier Mail* (20 January 2000:12), Sally-Anne Atkinson, former Lord Mayor of Brisbane, speaking of the beach from Currumbin said “It has universal appeal. It is the one constant in our lives when everything around us changes. Children still build sandcastles and collect shells, exactly as I did with my mother.”

It is little wonder that at the Gold Coast, the leisure culture of the beach has been transposed to the urban landscape. This research adopts the view that the beach is the most significant element of heritage at the Gold Coast. The purpose of the study is to look beyond the beach to interpret the cultural landscape of the city.

3.2.7 The Importance of Place Distinctiveness

As suggested in Part 2.2.4, the distinctiveness of the Gold Coast is being smudged as suburban residential development creeps into its hinterland and there is a shift towards an ordinary residential culture that rejects the city’s traditional culture of leisure and holidaymaking that has flourished on spectacle and fantasy from its beginnings as a marine township.

This phenomenon is emerging as a unique paradox within Australian urbanism. Traditional, ordinary ‘serious’ cities within Australia and through much of the Western world, are presently experiencing tension as global trends force spectacle and fantasy for pleasure and profit into existing urban fabrics.

Nevertheless, despite threats to its distinctiveness, the Gold Coast, amongst its diversity remains as a memorable experience. It is clearly different from other cities in physical, economic, social and political senses, which manifest in a unique cultural landscape. The unique cultural landscape is a precious resource that is important to conserve. It is widely recognised that place distinctiveness is especially important for tourist cities. (Ashworth and Goodall, 1990; Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; O’Hare, 1997).

Conservation values can be readily attached to places. Few would argue the importance of preserving the ‘green behind the gold’ or the beach, and strong arguments can be mounted for conserving many places within the built environment, but a more difficult challenge for the Gold Coast is:

“how do you conserve core elements of the cultural landscape that are immaterial, such as the sense of fantasy and the culture of change, but which are also vital to its sense of place?”

The first step in meeting this challenge is the principal intention of this research, to understand better, the material and immaterial values within the cultural landscape.

3.2.8 Sustainable Tourism

It would be negligent to present the theoretical framework for this cultural landscape research about the Gold Coast, without some specific discussion about its role as a tourist city.

Tourism was part of the Gold Coast from its earliest settlement, and while the city has been largely overlooked as a subject for serious urban studies, it certainly has been the subject of much scrutiny by tourism researchers. From the perspective of this dissertation, however, tourism research undertaken has not been strongly located within the realm of meaning and perceptions. The preference has been for development and application of heuristic models such as Butler's Destination Life Cycle concept, which are based on interpretation of trends and orders in tourism phenomena. (Butler, 1980)

In recent years, Faulkner and Russell (1998), recognising the interpretive limitations of conventional analytical frameworks, have explored methods to widen understanding of the change processes in tourism sites. In particular, they have written about Chaos Theory and the associated complexity perspective as a framework for understanding change, wherein chaos is seen as creativity, which leads to new complexities, and allows for self-organising aspects of systems. They have applied this perspective to the role of entrepreneurs whom they call 'movers and shakers' at the Gold Coast.

A major research program 'Visioning the Gold Coast 1998-2001' is being undertaken by the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Sustainable Tourism at Griffith University on behalf of the Gold Coast City Council and the tourism industry. The program was established in 1998 in response to realisation that the market was plateauing and concerns about an uncertain future, possibly with stagnation and decline, and that in an increasingly competitive environment the city needs a more sophisticated approach to tourism development.

The program is developing a comprehensive understanding of the position of the Gold Coast as a tourism destination and identifying if and how it can achieve long-term profitable and sustainable tourism growth. It is placing an emphasis on economic and market issues although it acknowledges the integrated cultural, social and environmental issues and includes investigation and consideration of these as part of the process.

Related to cultural landscape interpretation, it has done some market analysis on 'Images and Perceptions of the Gold Coast' to determine awareness levels, positive and negative images and satisfaction levels of tourists, to assist in re-inventing an image and formulating a positioning strategy for the city. While such analysis may meet the needs of this research program, it needs to be regarded as market research and relatively cursory in relation to the objectives of this grounded research into the complexities of the cultural landscape.

An early Scoping Paper produced by the CRC relayed industry feedback reported that:

All stakeholders ... believe that Surfers Paradise needs to be revamped and cleaned up. Some have argued, "clean up Surfers Paradise and half of the Coast's problems would disappear overnight. (1999:9)

When faced with crises such as a plateauing market and the prospect of stagnation and decline, it is tempting to make simple speculations about the causes and remedies for urban issues yet cities are complex. From a cultural landscape perspective, chaos theory as entertained by Faulkner and Russell makes much more sense.

The Visioning project has encountered some resistance. Again quoting the Scoping Paper, a theme park operator stated:

The whole exercise is far too academic. No research should be undertaken until there is a proven need for it and the industry can be assured of practical outcomes. We need outcomes now, not in three years time. (1999:11)

Nevertheless, the Gold Coast Visioning project has proceeded to address these complexities, presenting a valuable reality check for the city's tourism industry which till now has 'coasted' along in an ad-hoc manner with little need worry about its future sustainability.

3.2.9 Commodification of the Tourist Landscape

There has been much writing about the categorisation of tourism landscapes as landscapes of consumption or tourism products (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Ryan, 1991; O'Hare, 1997).

Tourism markets are becoming increasingly important sectors in urban economies. Hall (1991:3) has identified that "Tourism has not only provided new basic urban industry to help compensate for lost goods-handling jobs; it has transformed the vision of the industrial city." Australian cities are trying to capture not only domestic tourism but international tourism as new economies in the Asian region develop and create a market for what were once purely local or regional urban centres. The Gold Coast now has to compete with increasing competition, not only with traditional tourist destinations like Cairns, the Whitsundays, Sydney or Uluru, but from emerging counterparts in cities like Townsville, Mackay, Coffs Harbour or even Brisbane on its doorstep.

Entailed within the phenomenon that cities are becoming perceived as products to be sold and promoted, is the notion that entertainment and spectacle are central to their appeal. Fainstein & Gladstone (1997:25) have drawn the connection that "because the commodity it purveys is the quality of the city itself, its connection to urban culture is profound".

This commodity - the quality of the city - is intangible so the tourist experience is largely perceptual. As a result, tourist sites are “writ large with signifiers, where the representation (and hence the anticipation) of the experience is at least as important as its actuality.” (Judd & Fainstein 1997:241)

By the same token, the simple act of buying a souvenir, or taking a photo condenses a city into a thing now possessed and owned. It transcends the immediate experience so that it can be taken with them and relived in the memory (Judd & Fainstein 1997).

Where the city is for consumption, its image is of paramount importance. The cultural landscape is a precious commodity and the economy relies on its appeal.

O’Hare (1998) has described why the image of a tourism landscape is not fixed. The tourist market is a moving target. The tastes and desires of tourists are fickle. A tourist place may enjoy status as a fashionable destination and later experience a cycle of popular rejection.

While it is difficult to compare the Gold Coast with the significantly smaller tourist towns of Byron Bay and Noosa Heads, each of those places have gained market leverage through promoting an image that is ‘not the Gold Coast’. Such rejection and anti-promotion of the Gold Coast seems to derive from a combination of aspects and motivations of the tourist market, including; concerns about the environmental impacts associated with large-scale tourism development; a social reaction to mass tourism in favour of less ‘contrived’ tourist experiences; plus the emergence of alternative niche markets such as eco-tourism and cultural tourism which indeed, are less offensive to the purveyors of good taste in travel fashion.

As is common with the growth of mass tourism places worldwide, there have been growing concerns about the detrimental impacts of development on the Gold Coast’s natural environment. This has coincided with a general awareness of ecological conservation issues and a pertinent example is the treatment of mangrove vegetation. In the past, such areas were viewed as mosquito infested swampland and their modification into canal estates was supported without question. In recent years however, the scientific and general communities have become aware of the ecological values of mangroves, particularly their role as habitat and incubators for marine dwelling creatures. Removal of mangrove vegetation is now viewed as destruction and environmental vandalism, and in retrospect this casts a slur on the Gold Coast’s image for its perceived environmental mismanagement.

Resistance to mass tourism is also created through the social distinction between tourist and traveller which has been characteristic throughout much of recent Western history. ‘Sightseers’

are reviled as superficial in their appreciation of environments, peoples and places. Urry explains that:

in French social theory in particular the tourist is typically viewed as exceptionally superficial in his or her relationship with the urban form, because only the sense of sight is thought to be deployed. (1997:72)

By contrast, travellers are more noble in their pursuits, seeking cultural experiences, typically through immersion in the daily, ordinary, authentic life of a culture or place that is not their own. So places like the Gold Coast where the tourism industry is preoccupied with shaping and responding primarily to the desire for carnival-like diversion, often within constrained, packaged itineraries, are not appealing to a significant sector of the market that is yearning for extraordinary, but more 'real', self-found and serendipitous experiences (Judd & Fainstein 1999:268).

Contemporary travellers are more "ironic and cool, self-conscious and role-distanced" than their predecessors (Lash and Urry 1997:30). They are becoming more sophisticated and can make comparative connoisseurship of places (Urry 1999:74) and they typically want to experience the heritage, architecture and culture that make up a city's essence.

O'Hare (1998:64) suggests that the 'non-tourist' life of tourism places may become a resource for consumption by tourists, in a manifestation of what Urry (1990) calls the tourist gaze. A constant criticism of Surfers Paradise has been that it does not exhibit local culture. There has been mounting concern that Gold Coast residents have deserted Surfers Paradise as a venue for shopping, dining and entertainment in favour of other activity nodes within the city, and this in turn reduces its interest value for tourists (and travellers).

Eco-tourism and cultural tourism are growing niche markets being embraced across the country by governments, communities and businesses at all levels. The Gold Coast, with particular regard to its wonderful hinterland, has the potential to offer eco-tourism and cultural tourism experiences but to date has done little to capture such potential markets.

Governments have certainly recognised that cultural tourism is an effective tool for community and economic development as evidenced by commitment to \$120 million funding to establish a Queensland Heritage Trails Network. It is perhaps reflective of politics and a general (mis)understanding of the cultural profile of the Gold Coast, that no place within the region has been incorporated either financially or notionally in this State cultural tourism network at this stage. There is an emphasis on supporting rural areas, but it also appears that the concept of cultural tourism is being applied to include only places considered to be historically significant in terms of 19th century values.

While the Gold Coast has the potential to accommodate all of these varieties of tourism experience, it assimilates most closely with resort cities like Las Vegas or its sister city of Fort Lauderdale where the extensive tourism structure emerged post-war and is “constructed out of whole cloth” and without regard to any historical city form (Judd & Fainstein 1999:262). Not having a marketable historic past, these cities have fostered themed environments that owe more to Disneyland and Disney World than to conventional urban history or culture. Their success is in ‘excess’ (Anderton and Chase 1997).

It is no longer enough for such tourist sites to be merely a place of action or of dedicated relaxation. Now they must also distort time and bend space to produce the illusion of an extraordinariness or ecstasy of experience. The closer life in the tourist resort comes to resemble the pure play form, the more tourists will flock to visit. Urry (1999:32)

These tensions present a real challenge to the Gold Coast and underline the need for the city and the tourism industry to define its best position to optimise consumption (in a sustainable way).

3.2.10 Marketing & Promotion as Cultural Representation of the City

Marketing plays a particularly important role in resort cities like the Gold Coast. Public and private funds are spent on marketing campaigns, and the city ‘product’ is geared and imaged to appeal to potential visitors (Holcomb 1997:54).

In tourism consumption, it is the consumer, not the product that moves. Because the product is usually sold before the consumer sees it, the marketing of tourism is intrinsically more significant than in conventional commerce, yet resort cities worldwide have generally adopted a relatively small number of marketing strategies.

With the globalisation of mass tourism, place distinctiveness is increasingly important to resort cities in developing a competitive edge, but as Judd & Fainstein (1999:12-13) have pointed out, an odd paradox has emerged:

whereas the appeal of tourism is the opportunity to see something different, cities that are remade to attract tourists seem more and more alike. Multi-national hotels, chain restaurants and retail establishments follow a corporate model, resulting in the seemingly endless proliferation of atrium lobbies, formulaic restaurants, and chrome and glass boutiques selling identical merchandise.

The tourism industry is a vast network that is becoming better organised. There is increasing vertical integration, and coordination and packaging of tours and experiences. The pressure of handling large numbers of people and the efficiencies that can be achieved by selling a uniform product motivate suppliers to provide standardised services and facilities. This outcome is at odds with the objective of maintaining place distinctiveness and does not cater for the recognised growth and preference for cultural or ecotourism niche markets or more individualised vacations.

As a consequence, marketing and promotional strategies deliver mixed messages and are often reduced to simplistic representations of natural and cultural attractions.

The Gold Coast thrived very well for many years on the basis of its (in)famous bikini girl promotions but such an approach would have little success today.

Tourism Queensland has been a marketing leader with campaigns promoting State tourism. Most Australians understand what the slogan '*Beautiful One Day, Perfect the Next*' represents. For regional marketing and promotions in recent years, Tourism Queensland has implemented a Destination Development Model. The fourteen designated regions within Queensland are branded and then promoted with a catchy slogan. The Gold Coast has been pitched as '*Ever Changing, Always Amazing Gold Coast*' and in early 2000 it was re-branded as '*The Coast with the Most.*'

The most powerful method of spreading the promotional messages is through postcard imagery. Views and panoramas are set within a visual structure. In this sense the Gold Coast is fortunately photogenic, however, this is limiting as a representation of the cultural landscape. Urry (1999:75) explains how photography has been used to develop a tourist aesthetic reinforcing and elaborating dominant visual gazes, excluding as much as it includes. He quotes Wilson (1992)

The snapshot transforms the resistant aspect...into something familiar and intimate, something we can hold in our hands and memories.

Through snapshots, the invisible landscapes of the city, described in Chapter 3.1.4 are not captured.

In addition to visual imagery and uncomplicated slogans, tourist cities as places of entertainment and spectacle are increasingly flourishing on contrived promotional events and the Gold Coast does this well with a rich calendar of events such as the Indy Grand Prix, the Magic Millions horse sales and racing, the Gold Coast Marathon, Tropicarnival, and Schoolies Week (which actually runs for a month).

Conventions, exhibitions, conferences and trade shows are also considered to be an important component of tourism. Without a sizeable, world-class venue, it is believed that the Gold Coast has been missing out on a significant sector of its potential tourist market. There is promise, however, that this situation will be remedied, following the State Government's announcement in March 2000 of support and funding for development of a convention centre at Broadbeach.

Finally, amongst the suite of key promotional tools for tourist cities is casino gambling. In this aspect, the Gold Coast followed world trends with the opening of Jupiters Casino in 1986. The

casino appears as a strong element within all major marketing initiatives, from websites, brochures, posters, magazine publications and television commercials.

While marketing and promotional activities are powerful media and indeed assume the role of cultural representation of the city, they are largely a visual construct and fail to deliver understandings and messages that contain the meanings and complexities of the cultural landscape.

3.3 Theoretical Response to the Research Questions

As a field of research, urban design is generally regarded as a multi-disciplinary field of study rather than a discipline in its own right. It encompasses cultural landscape studies, urban planning, architectural design, and the myriad sub-fields within each. This is largely attributable to the complex, multi-faceted nature of cities and the relative recency of its emergence as a distinct field of study. The same can be said of the field of tourism research and tourism phenomena, so when, as this dissertation attempts, urban and tourism studies are combined as the focus of a single study, the development of a neat theoretical framework would be impossible.

This chapter has established that the Gold Coast is a strange alchemy and it is difficult to position it distinctly within one of these theoretical areas, however collectively, recognition of urban issues such as Sun-Belt Urbanism, the New Geographies, the Heritage Movement, and the New Urbanism, facilitates reading of its unique and complex cultural landscape.

Amongst heritage interpretations, New Urbanism and concern about the failings of Sun-Belt urbanisation and uncertainty about the New Geographies, managing the cultural landscape of the Gold Coast:

- as a holiday destination;
- with a growing permanent population;
- a culture that sees growth and change as progress, and
- a need to retain place distinctiveness,

presents a huge challenge that cannot be solved and ‘cleaned-up overnight’ as some people think can be done for Surfers.

This dissertation in responding to Research Question 1, attempts interpret the cultural landscape of the Gold Coast, with a special focus on Surfers Paradise and elucidate the core elements, both material (visible) and immaterial (invisible) as a framework for understanding so that others can devise ways to deal with it in ways that conserve its distinctiveness.

4.0 RESEARCH TECHNIQUE

This Chapter explains and justifies the process of collection and inquiry of data that forms the source of the study recording the sense of place at the Gold Coast through multiple single-perspectives.

The approach maintains a focus on interactions between the landscape and the social, economic and political processes by which it has changed over time with an emphasis on finding answers to the research questions formulated at the outset. It is a form of hermeneutic interpretation, triangulated against historical and theoretical contexts, to develop an explicit and grounded framework for analysis of the cultural landscape of the Gold Coast.

4.1 Choice of the Data Source

The reasons for selection of the *Gold Coast Bulletin* as the single data source are seemingly apparent and require little justification. *The Bulletin* has been in publication since well before the time period of this study and it continues today as the city's only daily commercial newspaper. In this it can be considered as the most constant and comprehensive reflection of a narrative for the region.

Former Queensland Premier and State Member for Surfers Paradise so appropriately described the *Gold Coast Bulletin* (22 March 2000, p18) as follows:

I have been fortunate to have been a part of a dynamic growth phase that has seen the Gold Coast develop and cement its place as Queensland's premier tourist destination... All these events have been faithfully recorded, along with many thousands of others by the *Gold Coast Bulletin*. The *Bulletin* is part of us; it shares our hopes, achievements, aspirations, follies and failures. It mirrors the place we call home and this great city we are still building.

Criticism of the *Bulletin* usually focuses on its thin news content, reporting of inconsequential local issues and its emphasis on real estate marketing. A fairer evaluation would be that those characteristics are simply mirroring the city's self-absorption, local politics and speculative culture.

At various times, the *Bulletin* has also been criticised for promoting negative imagery about the city, and certainly since late 1999 there have been concerted efforts to present the Gold Coast in a positive light as evidenced in regular features such as '*Love My Gold Coast*' in which selected Gold Coasters and visitors tell of why they love the place.

In *'Love My Gold Coast'* (Gold Coast Bulletin 20 April 2001), Member for McPherson Margaret May described The Bulletin as "the Coast's best friend."

Not only is it essential reading from a government, business or community perspective, it has also shown that it is prepared to lead by example, as a good corporate citizen, in sponsoring and supporting some of the city's most important events.

There is mutual benefit for the Bulletin as a sponsor and promoter of events at the Gold Coast and inherent biases are reported. Such biases are acceptable in hermeneutic studies such as this one which aims to interpret meanings within the texts.

4.2 About the Gold Coast Bulletin

The newspaper began as the *South Coast Bulletin* in the early 1900s and coinciding with the city's name change to Gold Coast, has been published as the *Gold Coast Bulletin* since 1959. For the purpose of this study from here on it is referred to as *'The Bulletin'*.

Over the decades, *The Bulletin* has changed:

- There is a noticeable evolution of formatting and graphic layout (bold captions and headlines did not emerge until the 1970s).
- The paper has not always been a daily issue. In 1949 – Wednesdays and Fridays, and until the 1960s it was published only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.
- The contents of the paper have also grown, reflecting the size and increasing activities going on in the city.
- Matters considered newsworthy have also changed overtime, for example fashions and social gossip such as 'who's holidaying at the various motels' received much attention in earlier newspapers. Similar matters are still reported, but today political and economic matters predominate.

4.3 Selection of Years

Having embarked on this research, with early ambitions of covering every year since 1949 and realising the enormous time required, the data selection was cut back to one year in each decade.

In my discussions with Richard Allom we had pin-pointed 1957 as the critical year from which the Gold Coast phenomenon as Playground of the Australian Dream really took off. 1949 provides an insight to what was happening at the Gold Coast before this shift. Having initially commenced this project in 1999, I chose the '9' years so have collected: 1949, 1959, 1969, 1979 and 1989 (Jan – Sept) and August 1999-April 2000.

Extractions from newspapers 1949 – 1989 were retrieved from microfilm produced by the State Library and available to view in the Gold Coast Local Studies Library. The library only holds

records up to October 1989. For this reason the data collection stops short of the entire year although this is not considered compromising to the research. I commenced daily clippings of the newspaper in August 1999 when I initially commenced this project. The last couple of years have been a chaotic time, particularly for Surfers Paradise, so it was seen as worthwhile to continue data collection into the year 2000 as this time period encompassed some significant events.

4.4 Seven-Steps of Data Processing

Step 1 Trawling through newspapers

Trawling through the historical newspapers was a time-consuming task. Extractions for each year included published news items, notices and advertisements which represent themes and expressions occurring at that time within the city.

Variations in the format of the newspapers impacted on the time it took to 'trawl' through the rolls. For example, 1949's newspapers are contained on two micro-film rolls, whereas in 1989 sometimes a roll only captures a week's worth of newspapers. However, the 1949 text was more difficult to read because of the (lack of) graphic style and with the more recent newspapers which have bold headlines and title captions it is easier to skim through the pages.

Selection of items was informed and intuitive. The process was pursued with a focus on the research questions always in mind and guided by understanding of general history and theoretical issues. Through continued readings of the source material and vigilance over my presuppositions I was satisfied that the data collected reasonably captures the core themes in history and key events of cultural change.

While some rural issues were selected along the way to give overall understanding of the way the city saw itself, there was a bias towards collection of items related to urban (and within that Surfers Paradise) issues. For example, notice of passing of a Coomera dairy farmer would not be selected, but the death of Sir Bruce Small who was influential in shaping the cultural landscape of Surfers Paradise, would be included.

There was also some acknowledged researcher bias towards selection of issues judged to be indicative of, or having an impact on the cultural landscape.

In total more than 1700 items were selected.

Step 2 Sorting & display of data into tables for each sample year

The most pertinent texts from these extractions were then sorted into a table that chronologically displayed them within one of four columns according to whether they represented physical, economic, social or political perspectives. Sample Data Sorting & Display Tables are shown in Appendix 6.2.

Many issues could fit within more than one perspective, so judgement of best-fit had to be applied to each article to determine whether its dominant influence was physical, economic, social or political.

The following table demonstrates the outcome of this data sorting and display process. It is notable that items reflecting the physical landscape are fewest throughout the decades. Until 1969, items reflecting social matters were most numerous, but in subsequent years the numbers items related to economic and political issues have prevailed.

	Jan-Dec 1949	Jan-Dec 1959	Jan-Dec 1969	Jan-Dec 1979	Jan-Sept 1989	Aug1999- Apr2000	Total
Physical	0	37	53	73	92	56	311
Economic	6	22	65	159	97	127	476
Social	48	45	80	95	63	75	406
Political	21	28	61	137	106	162	515
Total	75	132	259	464	358	420	1708

Table 2 - Data Collection by Number of Newspaper Items

Step 3 Compiling the data into raw, single-perspective readings

From the Data Sorting & Display Tables, the data through the decades, according to each perspective was then compiled. The result being, a raw, chronological collection of texts through slices of time, according to different perspectives, ie; physical, economic, social, and political. Essentially these raw readings represent a narrative of the city. Each perspective adds a meaningful layer without necessarily contradicting the others and enables understanding of latent, underlying or non-obvious issues.

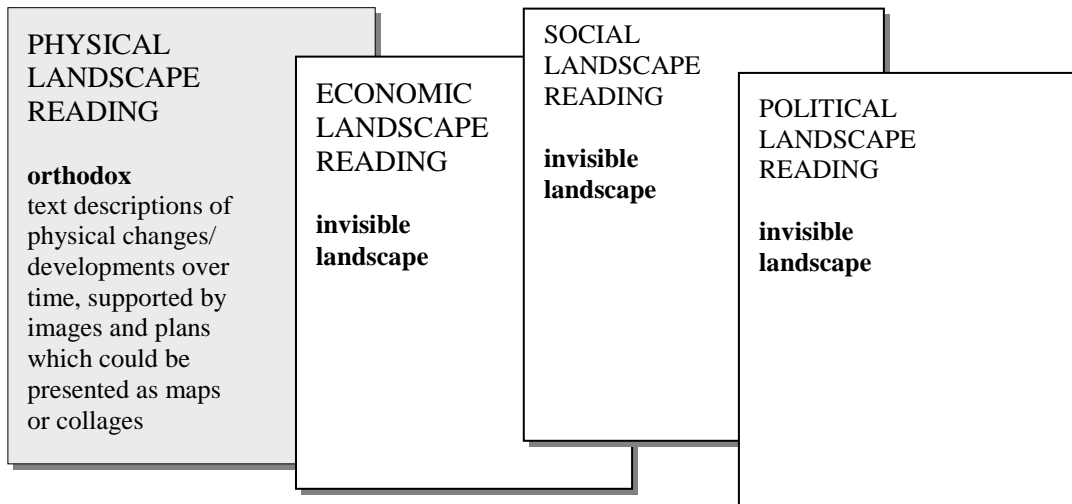


Figure 2 Diagram of the Four, Single-Perspective Landscape Readings

Chronological flow is preserved to demonstrate which events led to which consequences.

Step 4 Massaging the readings into a structure based on core &/or recurrent issues

For each ‘raw reading’ a list of headings representing core and/or recurrent themes, was formulated and then the data was sorted again according to these headings. This step grounded the data through loose coding of the texts. Richards & Richards (1990) point out that the concept of coding in grounded theory is a process of analytical integration where the researcher is in a constant process of linking theory to data, and through it, more refined theory emerges. The process is considered a legitimate technique of arriving at values. In this instance, the resultant data set of newspaper articles is dense, integrated. Fundamental to this research, the data accommodates complexities and different views associated with the themes.

Step 5 Synthesising & working the data into cohesive prose

While the initial sorting and interpretation of the articles was influenced by my instinctive understanding of the Gold Coast, the next stage of data interpretation encompassed a circular, iterative (hermeneutic) process that synthesised and worked the sorted data set into coherent prose to develop four, singular-perspective landscape readings that collectively provide a reinterpretation of the landscape that is deeper and more substantial.

Sequential narrative technique was used where possible, however, obviously there are many overlaps and linkages between time periods. In these situations the narrative has been pursued even where it breaks the boundaries of time divisions. The four landscape readings, containing the newspaper items are presented in Appendices 1.0 to 4.0.

Step 6 Elucidating core themes

This next step was initially phenomenological. I returned to the core themes within the landscape readings to extract key words and issues as they are consciously expressed, free from presuppositions about their causes. Faithful application of phenomenology maintains complete objectivity and requires a presuppositionless state for the process of data reduction. However, to interpret hidden (invisible) meanings often associated with phenomena, calls for hermeneutic completion which allows for directions and intentions rather than mere descriptions. Spiegelberg (1975) described this as 'hermeneutic phenomenology', a process that is useful to this type of research in advancing the understanding of how aspirations are embodied within the cultural landscapes. Accordingly, it was considered appropriate to introduce a small degree of contextual fore-knowledge in the final development of the core themes.

This step culminated the organisation and compression of the data into a form that permits simpler information processing. Succinct descriptions of the core themes enable quick attainment of understanding of the essential characteristics of the cultural landscape, which would otherwise be impossible because historical newspapers are not readily accessible, and newspapers generally are cumbersome and loosely structured. The core themes can solidly be considered to constitute the substance of the cultural landscape according to the narrative of the city. They are presented in Chapter 5.0.

Step 7 Indexing the Quintessences of Surfers Paradise

An index to the core themes was made to provide a cursory insight to the core themes that constitute the cultural landscape of Surfers Paradise.

4.5 Limitations of the Research Technique

The newspaper collection is not a complete set of data representing the time period between 1949 and 1999. Because it is essentially a series of slices through time it is acknowledged that there are some disrupted stories and meanings which have led to some partially unfounded conclusions. It is certain that some significant events or issues have been missed or 'leap-frogged'. Nevertheless, it was beyond my time capacity to do more for this research project and it is considered that the data volume and process of sorting and synthesis is adequate to draw valid meaning in a practicable and communicable way.

5.0 QUINTESSENTIAL SURFERS PARADISE

This chapter responds to Research Question 1, which asked: ‘*What is the substance of the cultural landscape of Surfers Paradise?*’ It identifies 44 core themes that have been derived from the four, single-perspective landscape readings. These themes can be considered to represent the substance of the cultural landscape. They can be read either separately, grouped according to their singular perspectives, or altogether. When understood collectively, they are more comprehensive than conventional interpretations that are limited to analysis of the physical landscape, and certainly more meaningful than typical chronological accounts of history. The simultaneous readings of the visible (physical landscape) and invisible landscape readings facilitate a heightened sense of place through presenting a dynamic understanding of the cultural landscape in which the past, present and future are seamlessly connected.

Descriptions of the core themes have been principally shaped by the newspaper data source. To a small extent these have been augmented by personal observations and previous studies by others (as explained in Chapter 4.0 The Research Technique). However, the integrity and value of the outcome is grounded in the meticulous and faithful regard of the newspaper content, presenting a dispassionate and fundamentally irrefutable interpretation.

The following table is an index of the core themes, which can be considered to encapsulate, at a glance, the past 50 years and the present, of the cultural landscape of the Gold Coast, with an emphasis on Surfers Paradise.

Table 3 – The Substance of the Cultural Landscape – Core Themes

	Physical	Economic	Social	Political			
1.1	A new urban structure	2.1	Boosterism & enduring confidence	3.1	A New Social Order	4.1	Tensions & opportunities in planning for growth
1.2	Mix of unique & conventional urban typologies	2.2	Growth indicators & comparisons	3.2	Why people flock to the Coast	4.2	Shifting administrative boundaries
1.3	Shifting trends in type & location of new development	2.3	Image building, marketing & promotional initiatives	3.3	Status symbols	4.3	Political persuasions
		2.4	Disposition to tourism	3.4	Pursuit of pleasure	4.4	Enigmatic politicians
1.4	Thematic			3.5	Yearning for praise	4.5	Government
				3.6	Attitudinal dualities &		

Physical	Economic	Social	Political
<p>expression & constructed imagery</p> <p>1.5 Multitude of unrealised dreams & schemes</p>	<p>2.5 Growing tourism</p> <p>2.6 Diversifying the economic base</p> <p>2.7 Negative publicity</p> <p>2.8 Eradicating growth inhibitors</p> <p>2.9 Real estate</p> <p>2.10 Competition</p> <p>2.11 Private enterprise</p>	<p>contradictions</p> <p>3.7 Seeking a sense of history & community</p> <p>3.8 Parodied stereotypes</p> <p>3.9 Social dilemmas</p> <p>3.10 Elements of disapproval</p> <p>3.11 Changing products, trends & home fashion</p>	<p>funding priorities</p> <p>4.6 Growing nature conservation ethos</p> <p>4.7 Change Vs conservation of cultural heritage places</p> <p>4.8 Urban character & amenity</p> <p>4.9 Increasing community activism</p> <p>4.10 Anti-developmentism</p> <p>4.11 Competing tourism & residential interests</p> <p>4.12 Accepting the validity of tourism as an industry</p> <p>4.13 Sentiments of State Government neglect</p> <p>4.14 Perennial political issues</p> <p>4.15 Confusion about the Gold Coast's identity</p> <p>4.16 Alarm about the image of Surfers Paradise</p> <p>4.17 Competitive swipes</p>

5.1 Physical Landscape Reading – Core Themes

Five core themes within the Physical Landscape, having been extracted from the Physical Landscape Reading, which is recorded in detail as *Appendix 1.0, pages 1-64*. Accompanying the text descriptions are some examples of the many newspaper articles from which the themes were derived. The table below summarises the five core themes and respective sub-themes where such have been articulated.

Table 4 – Physical Landscape Reading – Summary of Core Themes

Core Theme 1.1	A new urban structure
Sub Theme 1.1.1	Wide arterial roads & by-pass routes
Sub Theme 1.1.2	Insignificant railway
Sub Theme 1.1.3	Airport gateway
Sub Theme 1.1.4	Magnificent & omnipresent beach
Sub Theme 1.1.5	Multitude of shopping centres
Sub Theme 1.1.6	Street plantings & civic parks
Sub Theme 1.1.7	Urban residential sprawl
Sub Theme 1.1.8	Green hinterland
Core Theme 1.2	Mix of unique & conventional urban typologies
Sub Theme 1.2.1	Tall buildings
Sub Theme 1.2.2	Highway motels
Sub Theme 1.2.3	Waterfront living: islands, canal estates & artificial lakes
Sub Theme 1.2.4	Resort/golf course estates
Sub Theme 1.2.5	Conventional suburban estates
Sub Theme 1.2.6	Park/rural residential in the Hinterland
Sub Theme 1.2.7	Ubiquitous swimming pools
Sub Theme 1.2.8	Demolitions, vacant sites and redevelopment
Sub Theme 1.2.9	Landmark developments
Sub Theme 1.2.10	Theme parks
Core Theme 1.3	Shifting trends in type & location of new development
Core Theme 1.4	Thematic expression & constructed imagery
Sub Theme 1.4.1	Optimistic Modernism
Sub Theme 1.4.2	Resort expressions
Sub Theme 1.4.3	Mediterranean revivals
Sub Theme 1.4.4	Australian heritage themes
Sub Theme 1.4.5	Exotic landscaping
Sub Theme 1.4.6	Indigenous expression
Sub Theme 1.4.7	Advertising signs
Core Theme 1.5	Multitude of unrealised dreams & schemes

5.1.1 A new urban structure

The structure of the Gold Coast has largely been created since the 1950s.

Unlike conventional cities with a dense core surrounded by concentric growth patterns, the hub of the Gold Coast is a densely developed, elongated urban edge which follows the alignment of the ocean beaches

A common, but false impression is that of a spine of tall buildings extending along the entire coastline, but high rise development is generally confined within a series of clusters around commercial activity centres.

Within 'The Strip' areas of distinct local character deriving from coastal settlement before the 1950s is discernible, but the overriding character is that of a narrow band of tourist accommodation interspersed with residential and commercial uses.

Extending inland from The Strip, is a range of suburban forms which vary from the distinctive watery canal estates, to contained and resort style estates and suburbs typical of those found in any Australian city.

This low-rise mass grows amoeba-like, and in recent years, intrusions of development into the semi-rural hinterland, which has existed as a defining contrast to the urban settlement, are surreptitiously smudging that division.

Within suburban Gold Coast the key defining structural elements are the road system and shopping centres in a pattern that in some places defies logic but which results in an overall poly-centric order.

Other natural features such as rivers, estuaries, undevelopable wetlands, The Spit, The Broadwater and the headlands of the southern beaches provide precious relief within the overall city structure.

The eastern slopes of the mountain range from Tamborine to Springbrook remains relatively free of development, providing a contrasting form and green, vegetated backdrop to the city.

In combination, all of these elements create a unique and multifaceted urban structure.

5.1.1.1 Wide arterial roads & by-pass routes

Construction of the Gold Coast Highway was a major determinant in the formation of the city structure, in the era as private motor vehicle usage was democratised. The highway provided access to the Coast and facilitated the merger of formerly discrete coastal settlements into a unified strip.

But, as to be expected in the subsequent fast-growing, suburban-structured city, traffic has been a continual, growing concern. For many years, congestion only occurred during peak holiday periods, but as the permanent population has increased, so too has the volume of traffic, trip travel times, the regularity of traffic ‘snarls’ and the number of controlled traffic intersections.

Road planning, construction and upgrading has generally been reactionary, following demand for relief of pressure spots. This is typically done by widening roads to improve flows and ‘unclog the arteries’ resulting in some massive and domineering road infrastructure. At a more strategic level, however, road planning authorities have also applied the principle of creating by-pass routes. There is an apparent acquiescence to congestion on the strip and they have concentrated on developing a system of alternative north-south arterial routes for through-traffic and motorists who want to avoid it. It is customary to expect congestion around the tourist hotspots. Through traffic and people who want to avoid traffic delays are encouraged to veer away from the coastal strip and travel along one of the newer, inland arteries.

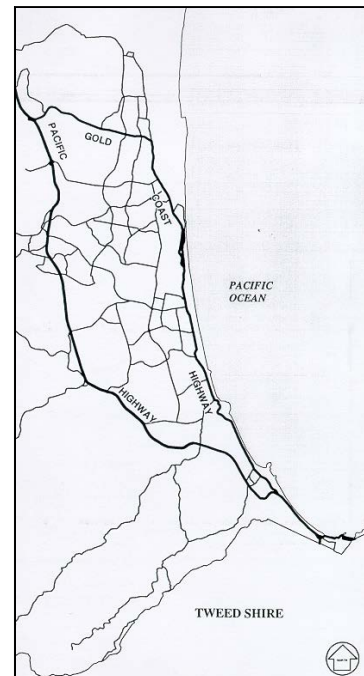
The newly widened Pacific Motorway supports this by-pass planning strategy at a regional scale. The current proposal to convert Gold Coast Highway through Surfers Paradise, from three lanes southbound to one lane in each direction to create a boulevard, and divert through traffic to Ferny Avenue, logically applies the by-pass strategy at a more localised level.

5.1.1.2 Insignificant railway

The first railway constructed in the 1880s, played a significant role in the expansion of the early marine townships of Southport and Coolangatta. However, within the new car-based urban structure that has been created since the 1950s, its importance diminished.

BY-PASS ROAD APPLAUDED: We cannot but applaud the fact that a “loop” is to be constructed to by-pass Southport and Surfers Paradise. The new road is to be ready by December of this year and should thus help to provide more reasonable traffic movement at the peak holiday period of Christmas and New Year...it is not the most important advantage of having this by-pass that the trip to Broadbeach and points south of there will be shorter by five miles, nor that the new drive will be very picturesque. The utmost importance does lie in the fact that many points of traffic congestion from Southport to Broadbeach will be avoidable by those who do not wish to spend a considerable time admiring the boot of the bumper bar of the car just ahead of them...

*South Coast Bulletin
11 February 1959, p2*



The alignment of the recently reinstated line to Robina, and the location of stations, provides some notional structure to the city. It offers an additional travel option for commuters and it is undoubtedly well patronised but it figures very little in the overall movement of people and the physicality of the city.

Whilst not prominent in today's urban structure, its influence in validating designation of future urban growth areas may be felt more in coming years as areas such as Coomera develop.

BEAUTY PLAN FOR THE NEW

TERMINAL: A concerted move is behind made to ensure that the proposed new terminal at Coolangatta Airport is complemented by beautification and landscaping... "What we need is something synonymous with Queensland – a tropical look with palm trees and hibiscus shrubs... Thousands of tourists gain their first impression of the Gold Coast from this airport and I'm afraid that currently it is rather a tawdry impression. As the gateway to the Gold Coast it should look picturesque and appealing."

*Gold Coast Bulletin
6 June 1979, p9*

BIG BEACH ASSAULT: There is no doubt that one of the Gold Coasts main attractions is its magnificent ocean beaches. The famous squeacky(sic) white sand puts places like Bondi and Waikiki to shame. Even though the high rise buildings in Surfers Paradise give the area a Miami, Florida, appearance, the beaches are still, whiter, cleaner and wider than their Australian and American counterparts. In two decades of massive tourist development, the beaches from Coolangatta in the south to Main Beach, Southport, in the north, have survived the ravages of man and nature... The authorities know the beaches are vital and so great care is taken to see they stay in top condition.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
20 October 1979, p56*

5.1.1.3 Airport gateway

Coolangatta airport is a magnet for activity at the southern part of the city. It is also the gateway and a defining element for visitors who travel by air to the Gold Coast. The potential to beautify its surroundings and glamourise its atmosphere to greet visitors and create positive lasting holiday impressions of the city, has been long recognised but remains largely unfulfilled.

5.1.1.4 Magnificent & omnipresent beach

The strip of ocean beaches is the primary generator of the urban form of the Gold Coast. It is a constant element in juxtaposition to the characteristically changing urban landscape. It is a potent symbol that pervades all aspects of the image and lifestyle of the city. Most beaches are extraordinarily white and wide. They provide an image of cleanliness and openness.

In recognition of the central importance of the beaches, great care and expense is taken to see that they stay in top condition. The Gold Coast has been acclaimed worldwide for pioneering dune management and coastal engineering practices to stabilise and nourish the beaches to counter the effects of erosion caused by natural events and modifications to the coastline that have interrupted natural sand replenishment regimes.

5.1.1.5 Multitude of shopping centres

Shopping at the Gold Coast is a typical function in commercial activity but it is also a popular pastime, particularly for tourists.

Southport has traditionally been the primary regional centre for commerce, and in the 1960s, Surfers Paradise became a fashionable destination for boutique shopping.

The opening of Sundale Shopping Centre in 1969 signalled a radical change in shopping patterns and the emergence of a multitude of centres that have little or no relationship to their surrounding landscape. Some are in locations that defy logic in terms of access and population catchments. The size and location of shopping centre proposals have always been highly contested. Nevertheless, a perceivable and reasonably sensible hierarchy has transpired.

The stand-alone centres, have increasingly incorporated entertainment as part of the shopper experience.

Other shopping centres such as the Paradise Centre in Surfers Paradise, Oasis On Broadbeach and the more recent Chevron Renaissance in Surfers Paradise, have been expressly designed as much for leisure as retail.

The creation of malls within shopping precincts became popular in the 1980s but has only been successful within tourist hubs where their primary role is outdoor leisure space.

Current trends in shopping centre design see a hybrid of the internalised 'big box' centres and outdoor malls, as can be observed at Robina Town Centre and Harbourside.

5.1.1.6 Street plantings & civic parks

The city council has a long-established commitment to civic beautification through street planting and the creation and maintenance of public parks. The creation of instant streetscapes through transplanting of mature trees has taken place since at least 1969 and is evident in many places.

SUNDALE OPENING CAUSES TRAFFIC CHAOS: Over 40,000 people packed into Woolworths \$7½ million Sundale trading centre yesterday for the biggest opening shopping day in Gold Coast history. The massive crowds created record off-season traffic jams on all roads leading to the 12 acre, three-level shopping complex. At one stage a two mile bank-up of traffic extended back from the Gold Coast Bridge traffic lights to Surfers Paradise... At Surfers Paradise, trading was reported to be quiet but not unusually so for the time of year...

*Gold Coast Bulletin
28 March 1969, p1*

A BRAND NEW ERA - HARBOUR TOWN BEATS THE U.S. AT ITS OWN GAME: A new style of shopping centre pioneered in the United States opens on the Gold Coast today – and America can experts say it is the best they have seen. The first customers to Harbour Town shopping centre were to begin lining up this morning for access to the first factory-outlet mall in Australia.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
7 December 1999, p3*

There is an old proverb which says, "First impressions are always lasting". And what can be of greater advertising value than a beautiful South Coast! We therefore, intend to proceed with an energetic policy of Tree and Shrub Planting in all the streets and encourage residents in civic pride by providing shrubs and trees on their footpaths, and by conducting garden and footpath competitions.

*South Coast Bulletin
20 April 1949, p19*

5.1.1.7 Urban residential sprawl

IT'S COMING FAST: A LINK TO BRISBANE: ...At first it was just a distant hope... but now it is a logical certainty that the link between metropolitan Brisbane and the Gold Coast, via the Albert Shire, is being fast accomplished. Brisbane is spreading southwards, at a phenomenal rate. The Gold Coast is expanding northwards, at a pace that is amazing. The time of the link-up is quickly approaching. Already the Gold Coast is being called the 'playground of Brisbane'. Geographically, of course, the Gold Coast is fortunate to be so close to thriving, bustling Brisbane, with its capital city onrush of industrial development, building and general expansion... Soon, the Gold Coast will be a virtual suburb of Brisbane, growing as the capital grows... "if the area grows according to this estimate, the population there will equal that of today's city of Toowoomba," Cr Muntz said.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
9 January 1969, p1*

AREA IS ON THE MOVE: Twenty-five years ago the journey from Brisbane to the Gold Coast was an endless stretch of trees with hardly a house in sight. Today, it is quite the reverse. While the Gold Coast has been developing at an incredible rate, the distance between the tourist and State capitals seems to have grown shorter... Outer suburbs in both cities have mushroomed almost to the extent that one can visualise the day they will become one. The northern sprawl of the Gold Coast now extends well past the Southport Drive-In Theatre which once stood out on its own surrounded only by virgin tea-tree country.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
20 October 1979, p59*

In the 1950s, the journey from Brisbane to the Gold Coast “was an endless stretch of trees with hardly a house in sight” (Gold Coast Bulletin, 20 October 1979) but by 1969 with the urban growth of Brisbane spreading southwards and the Gold Coast spreading northwards, it was visualised that the two would link, resulting in the Gold Coast becoming “a virtual suburb of Brisbane” (Gold Coast Bulletin, 22 September 1979).

Within the Gold Coast’s scenic hinterland, which was mostly the area of the former Albert Shire, the popularity of rural residential living grew considerably in the 1970s. With the double-barrelled ideal of leaving the big city blues behind, and an unlimited range of homemaking possibilities ‘still only minutes from the sea’ and with good fast roads going everywhere, the hinterland offered residents the best of all worlds.

The appeal of hinterland living persists for many homemakers today. However, the broader outlook of a merger with Brisbane, which was welcomed in 1960s, is viewed less positively. The sprawling nature of residential development has become a concern. In efforts to preserve a sense of separation from Brisbane, Albert Shire planning schemes have strategically maintained significant rural land use zones, and a specific ‘Inter-Urban Break’ was designated in 1995.

Despite commonly held perceptions of continuous development between Brisbane and the Gold Coast, and some apparent intrusions into the inter-urban break adjacent to the Pacific Motorway, a distinct belt of rural character is holding steady in the face of development pressure.

5.1.1.8 Green hinterland

The Gold Coast is blessed with a hinterland rich in ecological and scenic values. The Hinterland is defined by an ancient and spectacular mountain range and valleys. It offers visitors a range of nature-based and picturesque experiences, including subtropical rainforest, waterfalls, and breathtaking views. The close proximity of its wilderness areas to urbanisation is unique. This presents an accessible resource for enjoyment by tourists and residents, but also a challenge to ensure that its special values are not impaired by development and visitation. Importantly, in addition to being a storehouse of natural treasure and providing a cool green contrast to the urbanised lowlands of the Gold Coast, the Hinterland also provides the vital resource of water, without which the city could not function.

SCENIC RIM HAS SO MUCH TO OFFER: A giant crescent of spectacular mountain peaks, ranges and gorges only 120km from Brisbane – this is southeast Queensland’s Scenic Rim... The Brisbane region is indeed fortunate – mountain wilderness virtually at its doorstep... Managed and developed sympathetically, the Scenic Rim can become one of Australia’s exceptional wilderness, recreational and tourist areas.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
22 September 1979, p24*

5.1.2 Mix of unique & conventional urban typologies

The cultural landscape of the Gold Coast exhibits numerous building and settlement typologies which derive from various combinations of factors, including:

- the dramatic and diverse geography;
- the atypical urban structure;
- the principal function of tourism;
- reliance on the motor car as the primary means of transport; and,
- rapid and recent growth that has occurred within a post-industrial era that has seen increasing commodification of cities as places for consumption of fantasy and spectacle.

Among the more distinctive typologies are the tall buildings, motels, canal estates, golf course estates and theme parks, all of which portray a sense of fantasy and theatre associated with the city’s culture of leisure.

These exist alongside more conventional urban typologies, creating a cultural landscape that is unique, visibly diverse and sometimes puzzling with regard to orientation and sense of place.

5.1.2.1 Tall buildings

1959 saw the commencement of construction work on the Gold Coast's first tall building. Kinkabool, with 10 stories, appeared like a giant within the existing landscape of low-rise tourist accommodation and holiday houses.

The first of the Gold Coast Skyscrapers is well on its way. Rapidity with which "Kinkabool" home units in Hanlan Street, has suddenly grown from nothing but nage excavations, to six stories high, has been a source of wonder to local residents... When the building soars up to the full height of ten stories, who ever occupies the penthouse, will really be sitting on top of the world...

*South Coast Bulletin
25 October 1959, p29*

SKY THE MOON AND US! UP-AND – UP: Skyscraper projects for Surfers Paradise totalling more than \$4½ M, on the verge of being approved GY (sic) the Gold Coast City Council... This is the 'sky-high' news picture for the Gold Coast today as the city flies along on the crest of an inspiring new wave of publicity and development.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
21 November 1969, p1*

HI-RISE BEAUTY: TOWERS GOING UP AND UP: Tall towers symbolise the "onwards and upward" thrust of Gold Coast development but Surfers Paradise is not the only spot on the resort strip where long shadows are being cast. From north to south, the skyline is soaring as highrises mushroom to keep pace with residential and holiday demand for habitation. Spectacular and profitable they may be, but the skyscrapers and lesser-floored apartment buildings represent only the tip of the building boom...

*Gold Coast Bulletin
31 March 1979, p48*

Others followed Kinkabool's lead in the 1960s. Coinciding with the space age, tall holiday apartment buildings were the height of modernity and fantasy. People spoke of them as skyscrapers yet none had even approached 20 storeys. From a high rise unit people could experience an the uplifting sense of prospect, taking in spectacular long-distance and panoramic views of the surrounding region, including not only the magnificent sweep of the Pacific coast, but also the Nerang River, estuaries, islands and man-made canals, farmlands, and mountains framing the background. Holidaying in a high-rise holiday apartment as a contrast to everyday life in low-rise suburban homes, held an air of fantasy that was glamorous and thrilling.

By the late 1970s, a boom in high rise development had occurred and the familiar skyline of tall buildings in Surfers Paradise had formed. Every year bigger and better highrise apartment blocks outstripped and dwarfed their older counterparts. The tall towers were regarded as a symbol of the "onwards and upward" thrust of Gold Coast development (Gold Coast Bulletin, 31 March 1979). The strip from Main Beach to Broadbeach became known as the Golden Mile.

Construction and design of tall buildings in the 1960s and 1970s, was remarkably functional in form and expression. Generally symmetrically composed, with sheer, unadorned elevations, most were neat expressions of modernism.

In the 1980s, façades became increasingly punctuated with multi-faceted elevations and the standard introduction of generous balconies.

By the early 1990s a new generation in style of high-rise developments had emerged. Many were taller, more voluminous and more luxurious than their typical precedents, and while their designs have continued in modernist form, their external expressions have become increasingly post-modern and exuberant. Façades are commonly decorated with fanciful themes. Rooftops and landscaped grounds are designed as extensions of the theme, and there is a strikingly noticeable increase in the application of bold colour (except on those built by the Raptis Group which has seemingly adopted white as a signature colour).

Overall, the Gold Coast's tall buildings are different to those typically found in commercial centres of large cities. They create a scene that is characteristically clusters of tall residential buildings within landscaped grounds. Their collective image is heightened by its situation within a flat, featureless coastal plain.

The Gold Coast Urban Heritage and Character Study 1997, pointed out that the majority of postcards contain images of the portion of tall buildings fronting the beach at Surfers Paradise, often an aerial view from over the sea, which is incidentally an image that few actually see, but which has come to represent the essence of the Gold Coast.

Despite some approvals for high rise buildings within golf course resort complex developments in the Hinterland, few have eventuated to date, and the occurrence of tall buildings remains generally confined to the coastal strip.

*GRANDEST TOWER TAKES SHAPE:
The largest single tower construction
on the Gold Coast is under way at
Paradise Waters. Work on the 43-
storey Grand mariner residential
resort began in June and is expected to
take two years to complete...*

*Gold Coast Bulletin
19 September 1989, p68*



*Gold Coast Bulletin
29 March 2001, p25*

MOTELS MUSHROOM ON THE COAST: The Gold Coast – the biggest motel area in Queensland – has 119 of the State’s 511 motels... Indirectly, the State Government had promoted tourist growth by constructing 6000 additional miles of bitumen sealed roads, improving passenger rail services by dieselisation and introduction of air-conditioned carriages, constructed 13 boat harbours and 110 boat ramps and trebled the area of national parks and scenic reserves.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
4 July 1969, p6*

PARADISE CITY DEVELOPMENT: Paradise City, Queensland’s first town-planned city is a city of today and tomorrow... Just a bridge away from the excitement and fun that is Surfers Paradise. Paradise offers the prospective home builder the best of two worlds... They come to Paradise City, as Chaucer has it, ‘for to see’. These visitors are impressed by the overall quality of the estate. They see the stately homes with their gardens shot with the colour of the tropical plants; they note the well-clipped lawns and the gentle gradients which steal down to the water’s edge to trail their manicured edges by the coolness of the river. ...Some of them would say: “You would need to be a millionaire to live here.” This, fortunately, is not true, for all it might be true where they are well-to-do people living in Paradise City. There are ample building sites in Paradise City within easy reach of those with modest means.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
15 May 1969, p21*

PARADISE LAST – THIS LAND RUNNING OUT: Given a twist, Mark Twain’s advice about buying land ‘because they ain’t making any more’ applies with particular emphasis to Paradise Waters, one of Australia’s most exclusive residential areas... When the final Paradise Waters sale contract is signed it will complete one of the most amazing sagas in the history of the Australian real estate industry.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
31 March 1979. n28*

5.1.2.2 Highway motels

Motels became popular in the 1960s, as a consequence of societal change towards motoring holidays. An abundance of motels developed at the Gold Coast, predominantly situated adjacent to the Gold Coast Highway. Less spectacular in nature to high rise buildings in terms of size, form and prestige as holiday accommodation they are nevertheless a distinctive typology within the range of building forms at the Gold Coast. Motels are generally modest in plan and construction, but they commonly have exotic or playful names, themed and/or colourful facades and bold signs to attract highway travellers. Many have disappeared through redevelopment but motels remain integral to the character of the highway landscape, offering affordable tourist accommodation.

5.1.2.3 Waterfront living: islands, canal estates & artificial lakes

For waterfront living with direct residential frontage and boating access, the Gold Coast is second to no other place in Australia.

The virtually man-made islands such as Chevron, Paradise and Capri, and canal estates within the basin of the Nerang River commenced in the late 1950s. There was also some early canal estate development off the Broadwater at Anglers Paradise.

These distinctive, watery suburban forms were constructed largely on low-lying ‘swampy’ land. Reclamation was achieved through dredging and filling. Earth fill was not available to economically develop the land for home sites, but canal excavations provided the necessary fill and created a special type of estate, which gives residents an outlook and direct access to water.

These urban forms present a peculiar suburban pattern in which residences turn their backs on the street and focus on their aspect to water. Many properties have jetties with boats “moored at the bottom of the garden” (Gold Coast Bulletin, 31 March 1979). Often regarded as ‘boating paradise’, waterfront living offers a lifestyle that is regarded as exclusive, luxurious and leisurely. Allotments with water frontage are highly sought after and limited in supply, and therefore more expensive than ‘dry blocks’. Canal cruises are a popular tourist activity enabling outsiders to gaze at these unique neighbourhoods and their many graceful and extravagant homes. Despite little semblance to Venice, romantic declarations that the Gold Coast is the ‘Venice of the Pacific’ have long persisted.

Canal estate development has extended into large sections of low-lying land and floodplain, from Hope Island in the north to Currumbin Waters in the south, and westwards to Benowa, Clear Island Waters and Robina. Some estates are so far inland that tidal flows are negligible and navigable access to the Broadwater is convoluted. These are noticeably different in character to the earlier canal and river front estates, by an absence of jetties, pontoons and boating craft.

With increasing distance from the coastal dunes, developers are faced with greater environmental and engineering challenges. Consequently, as the availability of land that is suitable and economically feasible for canal estate development has exhausted, the pace of such has almost ceased. In recent years, residential development initiatives to provide waterfront living have been largely confined to artificial lakes and the creation of the Sovereign Islands in the The Broadwater.

In retrospect, with today’s greater understanding and sensitivity to ecological issues, it is perhaps doubtful that these pragmatic forms of waterfront development would have occurred. Nevertheless, they exist as a distinctive and highly valued element within urban landscape.

*WORLD PLANNING EXPERT
CREATES ISLAND EXPERIENCE:
The creation of Australia’s most
unique island community within
reach of the international fun city of
the Gold Coast, was a task
requiring the planning skills of
experts from many countries.
Hawaiian-based planner Larry
Helber, who played a major role in
the original islands concept is
convinced The Sovereign Islands off
the northern Gold Coast is one of
the few estates which really lives up
to its positioning statement – the
finest residential islands in the
world...*

*Gold Coast Bulletin
17 June 1989, p17*

GOLF FEVER: They're chipping in millions of dollars to turn the Gold Coast into the Golf Coast... Forty-four new courses have come in to play in the last 12 months, are under construction, at advanced planning stage or have received council blessing on the Gold Coast and in the neighbouring shires. Together with the 20 established coastal and hinterland courses, the new and planned courses will go a long way to closing the gap on the Palm Springs target set by many as the optimum for the tourist strip. Entrepreneurial developers, however, see a changing emphasis in the long-drawn comparisons between the Gold Coast and the southern Californian tourist city, which, at last count, boasted 75 golf courses. "While we don't see a golf course as being economically viable in the context of the weekly through-put of players paying X number of dollars per round, we do see the course as providing an attractive and desirable focus of open, recreational space in residential developments...

*Gold Coast Bulletin
24 July 1989, p4*

THE COAST'S BEVERLY HILLS: Panorama Park, Mudgeeraba, could well be the Gold Coast's answer to Beverly Hills, California... This block has, without a doubt, one of the best views available on the entire Gold Coast...

*Gold Coast Bulletin Real Estate
14 January 1889, p201*

5.1.2.4 Resort/golf course estates

As residential development schemes advanced towards the floodplains in the 1970s, the concept of clustered, resort-style housing was seen as a means of exploiting floodable land that was previously considered to be wasteland. Housing could be concentrated on knolls of higher land, flanked by landscaped golf courses on the surrounding low-lying floodable land, which also served as a recreation and open space system.

Combined with developing interest in golfing as a sporting and recreational activity, particularly by the increasing influxes of Asian tourists willing to pay high prices for a round of golf, this concept became feasible and was taken up with fervour in the 1980s. Large and typically gated leisure estates with golf courses and other resort style amenities, such as Royal Pines, Palm Meadows, Paradise Springs, Parkwood, Hope Island and Sanctuary Cove have since become a significant characteristic within the cultural landscape.

5.1.2.5 Conventional suburban estates

The virtual absence of news items or editorial about conventional suburban estates is notable, yet their growing expanse is undeniable, with an increasing impact on the overall character of the city. This is occurring, primarily through smudging the boundaries and distinctive contrasts that have existed between the developed coastal plain and the rural nature of the Hinterland. The actual settlement typology attracts little praise, but it also receives little denigration. Although a significant proportion of the residential population dwells within these conventional suburbs, they figure little within the psyche and popular imagery of the city.

5.1.2.6 Park/rural residential in the Hinterland

Park Residential and Rural Residential settlement is popular for homemakers seeking an alternative to the more compact suburban typologies available on the coastal plain, but with accessibility to urban services and facilities and the beach. It

offers the folkloric fantasy of more meaningful country living where people can escape from the commotion, without having to forego the benefits of more urbanised environments. Paradoxically, this form of settlement is inefficient in terms of infrastructure provision and minimisation of environmental impact.

5.1.2.7 Ubiquitous swimming pools

With an ideal climate for swimming and outdoor living, it is no surprise that a birds-eye view of the Gold Coast reveals a proliferation of swimming pools as patches of blue. Almost every tourist accommodation establishment and residential complex has a communal swimming pool.

THE PERFECT CLIMATE: The Gold Coast climate has 85 per cent sunny days – ideal for swimming pools and outdoor living areas. The Gold Coast is also reputed to have more pool builders per head than any other area in Australia...

*Gold Coast Bulletin
16 August 1979, p43*

Private pools in suburban backyards are also seemingly more ubiquitous at the Gold Coast than in the large southern cities. Pool building is a significant part of the construction industry.

5.1.2.8 Demolitions, vacant sites and redevelopment

By the late 1960s, redevelopment of sites within the coastal strip began to occur. In years since, many segments of the early fabric of the city have been erased and replaced with new, larger developments. Such change is generally accepted as progress and proceeds without controversy. In fact change is generally embraced with excitement and anticipation. Change is so pervasive that it is common to view a newly vacant site and not be able to recall what existed there previously. Bulldozers and cranes representing the mechanics of demolition and redevelopment are signifiers of change.

Concern about the loss of heritage rarely obstructs development proposals, although demolition of landmarks and icons can prompt controversy and cause anguish and a sense of loss to people who valued them.

SURFERS 'LAND BANK' FEAR SPARKS CITY INVESTIGATION:
Surfers Paradise alderman Gary Baidon has triggered a Gold Coast City Council probe into what he fears may be a 'land bank' of cleared properties that are giving parts of the tourist capital the 'Beirut look'... He said that it appeared that undeveloped land was just 'sitting there' while prices increased... The demolition of whole blocks of buildings was taking out low-cost accommodation, shops, offices and various commercial activities that generated business in Surfers Paradise... the effects of cleared land on the economy of Surfers Paradise was already apparent.

Gold Coast Bulletin 3 June 1989, p16

TOWER TO SHINE AT BROADBEACH:
Broadbeach's bid to outshine Surfers Paradise as the centre of the Gold Coast will take another step forward with the Niecon Tower development.

Gold Coast Bulletin 11 February 1989, p175

NAUSTRALIAN VERSION OF DISNEYLAND:
The Albert Shire Council has approved in principle of a £125,000 Pleasure Island project incorporating an Australian version of the famous Disneyland in America...the pleasure island is to be constructed at Carrara, adjacent to the Surfers Waters-Ski Gardens. It will cover an area of 10 acres... Mr Alexander McRobbie, of Surfers Paradise who heads a private company, Pleasure Island Pty Ltd, plans to have his railroad operating on the island this year...other features of Pleasure Island include a modern freeway and miniature petrol driven cars, treasure caves, an ancient castle with a draw ridge and several suits of armour, a lighthouse and private galleon...Cobb and Co. coaches, a pioneer bank and bush rangers will provide an early Australian atmosphere, whilst a rocket on which people will watch films and go on a simulated journey to the moon will add the modern touch...

South Coast Bulletin 28 October 1959

Some former landmark places, of which no physical evidence remains, are indelible images in the memories of long term residents. People more recently acquainted with the city are often ignorant that such places existed, or they rely on historical photographs to construct their impressions of history.

In the 1980s, Surfers Paradise experienced wholesale clearing of prime real estate sites, many of which have subsequently been left undeveloped. Interim uses such as mini golf courses or carnival type attractions have established on some, but most have been left vacant or used for car parking. These are viewed with contempt for their adverse impact on the character and vitality of the locality.

5.1.2.9 Landmark developments

The Gold Coast is a city with few public or institutional buildings. Landmark developments are usually the product of private enterprise and afforded a sense of admiration and public ownership that, in other cities is generally reserved for civic places.

5.1.2.10 Theme parks

A penchant for theme parks has existed at the Coast since the idea of Disneyland which opened in California in 1955, was connected to the dawning realisation of the region's great tourism potential. Many of the earlier themed attractions such as the Jack Evans' Pet Porpoise Pool, Pleasure Island, Surfers Water-Ski Gardens, Traintasia, Marineland, Magic Mountain, and various waterslides have disappeared. In 1979, Sea World on The Spit was the Coast's only major theme park. In the 1980s, Dreamworld and Movieworld were established within the Pacific Highway corridor at Coomera/Helensvale. These three attractions have become predominant and maintain their popularity through continual change and addition of new attractions to increase excitement. They are a significant and visible feature in the

landscape, existing in a natural and easy relationship with the urban activity, culture of leisure and image of the city. Theme parks are the purest expression of the themed environments of shopping centres, resorts, gated communities and smaller tourist attractions, which characterise much of the Gold Coast.

1.3 Shifting trends in type & location of new development

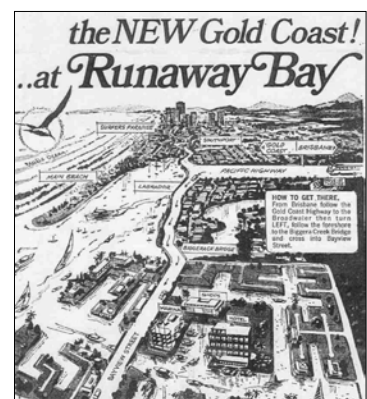
Trends and transitions in type and location of property being developed in a region can be identified by marketing advertisements.

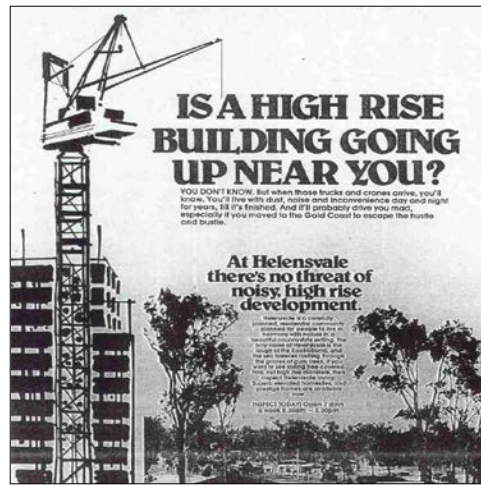
Clearly indicative of the Coast's dormancy until the 1950s, the Bulletin in 1949 contained no property marketing, but by 1959, advertisements for land sales became regular newspaper content.

In **1959**, allotments in numerous residential housing estates were available for purchase. Key attributes within marketing pitches were waterfront homesites and proximity to Surfers Paradise. The only individual building marketed was Kinkabool.



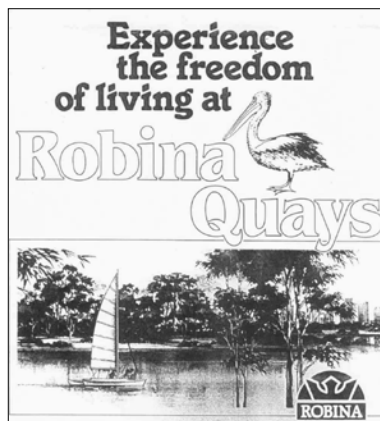
In **1969**, allotments in residential housing estates were the main properties available; a major proportion of those being in canal estates; the remainder being in estates marketed as 'acreage'. As the pace of high rise developments picked up, units in tall buildings in Surfers Paradise came onto the market.





By **1979**, there was an explosion of high rise residential development and a plethora of units for sale. Most of these were situated in Surfers Paradise and immediately adjacent suburbs on the strip. Most were within the height range of 10-14

storeys, although a couple in the mid-20s and one 30-storey building was advertised. Numerous major canal estate developments were available, and acreage allotments in estates encroaching further into the Hinterland were plentiful.



By **1989**, the availability of high rise residential units was more spread along the Coast. Their heights ranged from 7 to 43 storeys, with a significant incidence of buildings around 30 storeys high. Low rise multi-unit developments became commonplace. Some waterfront estates were available but

remarkably fewer than in preceding decades. Houses and condominiums within resort style estates integrated with golf courses were newcomers to the market.

By **1999-2000** the availability of high rise residential units continued, generally within the strip from Main Beach to Broadbeach. New waterfront allotments had become relatively scarce – available only at the Sovereign Islands and Benowa Waters. A wide range of residential estates was advertised, significantly in the Robina region and west of the Pacific Motorway. Gated, residential villa resorts had become commonplace, particularly in redevelopment areas within the coastal strip.

Throughout the decades, non-residential developments have not figured strongly property market.

5.1.4 Thematic expression & constructed imagery

The rapid and recent growth of the Gold Coast has not afforded it the luxury of time, or a conventional underlying structure needed, to base its identity and authenticity on age and organic growth. Conventional stylistic traditions are characteristically set aside. Urban qualities and identity have been largely manufactured through application of eclectic and often bold thematic expressions.

Most commonly, themes relate to the culture of fantasy and escapism deriving from the city's foremost role as a holiday destination. Romantic and seductive imagery appropriated from a variety of exotic places, merges together to create strange new hybrids. There is little discrimination between historically derived and artificially constructed urban forms and imagery.

Being a city in which there is little demarcation between work and play, artificial expression has proliferated, not only in tourist areas, but throughout much of the urban landscape. Fantasy is expressed in place names, buildings and landscaping. A recent phenomenon is the construction of entry statements for housing estates and resort developments which create a structural frame for escape, marking a dividing line between the ordinary and the extraordinary. Entry statements are essentially a packaging mechanism to mark a special place and give it additional dimension.

Frequent negative reactions under the guise of good taste, have failed to undermine the city's the boldness and confidence. There appears to be growing understanding and acceptance the cultural origins of the Gold Coast, and that the superficiality of qualities manufactured through thematic expression and simulation, need not be viewed as less valid or meaningful than historical conventional expression in other cities.



A real estate advertisement for "The Bal Air" project. The headline reads "Gold Coast REAL ESTATE arts, with 40 sales". Below the headline is a large photograph of a modern, multi-story residential building. The text describes the project as a "boutique complex" with "2 car spaces, low roof comp" and "this unit must be sold". It also mentions "The MODERN, safe and 1 story 4 bedrooms". At the bottom, there are three columns of text: "nt ch", "Magnificent Main Beach™ EXCELLENT PRESENTATION FULLY FURNISHED PREFERABLE NORTH EAST ASPECT The MODERN™ PRESENTED 1 bedroom 2", and "Magnificent Main Beach™ EXCLUSIVE BOUTIQUE COMPLEX ONLY 10 UNITS REMAIN THIS UNIT MUST BE SOLD The MODERN, safe and 1 story 4 bedrooms".

COLOUR AND IMAGINATION

USED IN NEW SURFERS BANK: A bright red ceiling and black and white tonings in furnishings and floor coverings have been featured in the new contemporary two-storey ES&A Bank, Pacific Highway, Surfers Paradise ... The public space provides a suspended type-writing bench flanked by the a brightly coloured wall Mural which is further emphasised by concealed lighting... Indoor gardens have been used effectively, both in the main building and forecourt which leads into the Manager's office... the front of the building is a complete curtain wall glazed with glass and Perspex and fixed with black glass louvres. Special facilities for floodlighting at night have been added...

*South Coast Bulletin
25 October 1959, p5*

SAY 'ALOHA' TO THE HAWAIIAN: Surfers Hawaiian is a welcome addition to the Surfers skyline, reflecting the tropical flair and warmth of that other Pacific paradise of sun and surf, the Hawaiian Islands...

*Gold Coast Bulletin
1 July 1989, p73*

ITALY? FRANCE? BEL AIR?: Mediterranean Masterpiece – Main River luxury! Situated in the Gold Coast's most exclusive neighbourhood, Paradise Waters.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
8 July 1989, p211*

5.1.4.1 Optimistic Modernism

Modernism, in a new, light-hearted nature reflecting the optimism of the era, bloomed at the Gold Coast in the 1950s. Simple materials in smart compositions were combined with bright colours and quirky features and even murals. Externally roofs were typically flat or butterfly-shaped and glazing was extensively used. Fashionable interiors had new surfaces such as Wunderlich and perspex, venetian blinds and indoor plants. Remnants of this modern style can still be seen throughout the coastal strip, particularly in domestic architecture within the earliest islands and canal estates that were created in this era.

5.1.4.2 Resort expressions

Expressions of beach holiday themes reflecting the casual, balmy, tropical ambience of other 'paradises' such as the Pacific Islands, the Riviera, Hawaii, Florida and the Caribbean are widespread, particularly in resort developments. Local developers and designers have frequently made reconnaissances to such places to study their environments, gather ideas about what creates their magic, and bring back concepts, styles and schemes, to implement at the Gold Coast.

5.1.4.3 Mediterranean revivals

While Mediterranean revival themes have become popular Australia-wide since the late 1980s, the Gold Coast has embraced them in extravagant and energetic ways. Classical forms and decorative elements and finishes originating from Spain, Italy, France, Greece, Egypt and Morocco, have been used in contemporary locations and hybrid, often playful compositions. This neo-Mediterranean aesthetic lends these places an air of luxury and historicism, but its success is also attributable to the sense of community and security that is created by their pedestrian scale qualities. Developers ever-searching for a new thematic twist, have recently drawn a similar aesthetic from the 'brownhouses' of New York neighbourhoods.

5.1.4.4 Australian heritage themes

With the inference of authenticity, themes drawn from Australian history and folklore are a recent introduction. These are just as fanciful as the themes adopted from foreign countries.

5.1.4.5 Exotic landscaping

Exotic plantings of large shade tree species such as Moreton Bag Figs and Norfolk Pines are significant characteristics of the cultural landscape but these are not unique to the Gold Coast. They are elements common to many Australian coastal settlements. The more recently introduced resort-style landscaping, within which palm species are dominant, is also not unique, but it has flourished at the Gold Coast and become synonymous with the city's image.

Palms grow well in the sub-tropical climate and sandy coastal soils. Tolerant to transplanting, they are ideal for creation of instant oases. They fit perfectly with the resort culture of the Gold Coast, creating an informal, tropical atmosphere and evoking imagery of Pacific island paradises and extravagant leisurely lifestyles of the rich and famous. Palms are found not only in landscaping, but they are represented within many aspects of the cultural landscape, from place names, to advertising signage, promotional material, and even clothing.

5.1.4.6 Indigenous expression

While many places of cultural and spiritual significance to Aboriginal people must have been obliterated through development of the Gold Coast, the cultural landscape is not devoid of indigenous expression. With sentiments of expressing 'genuine' Australian culture, Aboriginal names have been commonly, and perhaps tritely, applied to new places and to environmental conservation areas for their associations with an ancient culture of environmental sensitivity.

MAN TO RIDE INTO COAST FOLKLORE: A larger than lifesize statue of The Man From Snowy River is nearing completion and coming to the Gold Coast... "Just as the Michelangelo replica in the Raptis Plaza, Surfers Paradise creates an environment. The Man from Snowy River, will bring Australia's folklore out into the open at Broadbeach for both tourists, residents and especially school children to enjoy," Nikforides said.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
19 September 1989, p12*

PALMS, PRESTIGE: A mass of palm trees gives this auction house a relaxed, informal approach in keeping with the style of the Gold Coast... The house, a modern, medium sandstock brick affair, is located at one of the prestige addresses of the Gold Coast - 3 Binda Place, Sorrento... A feature of the fence is the old Sydney lace iron inserts with matching entrance gates.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
5 July 1979, p40*

NATIVE NAMES: ... "In the past, subdivisions have brought criticism on to their heads by tearing out the natural foliage and naming their estates and the streets after overseas resorts," Mr Leslie said... "Koala Park will be preserved as an Australian estate, the streets have topical aboriginal names such as Guyra Avenue which means "place of fishing," Elanora Drive (theme by water), and Awoonga Avenue (sheet of water), worth in the vicinity of beautiful with hundreds of newly planted trees...

*South Coast Bulletin
4 October 1959*

The natural environment lobby is persuasive in promoting planting of endemic species. The council supports this wholeheartedly within the Hinterland and around areas of remnant natural vegetation within the urban landscape. Conserving native vegetation supports both ecological values and the cultural landscape, of which the natural environment is an integral element.

5.1.4.7 Advertising signs

Advertising signs are prolific within the vicinity of commercial land uses at the Gold Coast. This is particularly noticeable within the strip of the Gold Coast Highway between Surfers Paradise and Mermaid Beach where their massing creates a landscape that ‘screams’ at passing motorists day and night.

Since as early as 1959 there has been concern about ‘over-doing it’ and a seemingly un-winnable campaign by the council to regulate signage has festered.

Some distinctive signs are useful as reference and orientation points. A few signs, such as those at the Pink Poodle Motel, the Hard Rock Café and the Barbarian Steakhouse are landmarks which have become fondly valued landscape elements that contribute to the sense of place. But the profusion of lack-lustre and unimaginative signs, incessantly flagging and competing for attention, creates a repetitious visual monotony that is considered an eyesore by many people

5.1.5 Multitude of unrealised dreams & schemes

Many of the grandiose and fanciful schemes that have been proposed for the Gold Coast have not eventuated. These include, but are by no means limited to: development of the Currumbin Estuary as a boat harbour; a hydrofoil service to Brisbane; a Playorama centre on South Stradbroke Island connected to the mainland by cable car; a macadamia nut

SIGN THAT TELLS: Queensland's largest neon sign last night joined the cluster of electric sparklers that make Surfers Paradise gay and bright by night... Gold Coast trawler fisherman have asked the authorities to leave the sign on so as they can obtain navigational fixes and some 'planes are using the sign as an approach guide to Coolangatta airport.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
8 July 1969, p1*

THE TAJ MAHAL, TOO?: From the ubiquitous promoter and publicist of the Gold Coast, Brian Shepherd, known as The Mouth comes what must surely be the quote of the year. In a press release this week, he said "Bill Rameau (a Mermaid Beach signwriter) will visit Las Vegas and stop by France and have a long, hard look and study of the Eiffel Tower for me, as we also have in the melting pot a great idea for one of our own."

*Gold Coast Bulletin
12 May 1979, p9*

tourist attraction at Coomera; Pat Zarro's super tower in Surfers Paradise; Brian Shepherd's Eiffel Tower replica; a floating five storey hotel; an airport on Crab Island; Desmond Brooks' Fantasea theme park above Bruce Bishop car park; a monorail system from Southport to The Spit and Pacific Fair; Footprints Discovery Park at Pimpama, Portofino resort on Hope Island; Dolly Parton's Dixie Stampede at Mermaid Beach or above Bruce Bishop car park; and, China World theme park in Mermaid Beach or Surfers Paradise. It is interesting to postulate about the physical landscape today had some of them been realised.

5.2 Economic Landscape Reading – Core Themes

Eleven core themes within the Economic Landscape, having been extracted from the Economic Landscape Reading, which is recorded in detail as *Appendix 2.0, pages 1-88*. Accompanying the text descriptions are some examples of the many newspaper articles from which the themes were derived. The table below summarises the eleven core themes and respective sub themes where such have been articulated.

Table 5 – Economic Landscape Reading – Summary of Core Themes

Core Theme 2.1	Boosterism & enduring confidence
Core Theme 2.2	Growth indicators & comparisons
Core Theme 2.3	Image building, marketing & promotional initiatives
Sub Theme 2.3.1	Tourism promotions – who’s responsible
Sub Theme 2.3.2	Promotional themes
Sub Theme 2.3.3	Promotional schemes & gimmicks
Sub Theme 2.3.4	Bikini girl promotions & Meter Maids
Sub Theme 2.3.5	Targeted tourist markets
Sub Theme 2.3.6	Festivals and events
Sub Theme 2.3.7	Film industry
Sub Theme 2.3.8	Conventions
Sub Theme 2.3.9	Holiday packaging
Sub Theme 2.3.10	Cheap air fares
Sub Theme 2.3.11	Places names as promotion
Core Theme 2.4	Disposition to tourism
Core Theme 2.5	Growing tourism
Core Theme 2.6	Diversifying the economic base
Core Theme 2.7	Negative publicity
Core Theme 2.8	Eradicating growth inhibitors
Core Theme 2.9	Real estate
Core Theme 2.10	Competition
Core Theme 2.11	Private enterprise

5.2.1 Boosterism & enduring confidence

Boosterism and enduring confidence have been important in setting the ambitions and pace of progress at the Gold Coast.

5.2.2 Growth indicators & comparisons

Since the late 1950s, the Gold Coast has experienced and continues to experience rapid and sustained growth well above projections and expectations, and beyond comparison with any other Australian city. Growth and change and pride and wonderment in that growth and change are central to the culture of the city.

5.2.3 Image building, marketing & promotional initiatives

Image building, marketing and promotional initiatives are a major function of the Gold Coast's tourism economy.

5.2.3.1 Tourism promotions – who's responsible

The tourism industry is massive with many stakeholders and diverse interests. Promotion is an essential component, yet for greatest effect it needs to be informed by research and planning and supported by appropriate product development. The roles and responsibilities of the leading organisations are uncertain, shifting and fragmented, and their interrelationships are tenuous. The need for solidarity is undisputed but effective coordination remains an un-met challenge.

5.2.3.2 Promotional themes

The simple, triple-faceted theme of 'sun, surf and sex' created powerful imagery and widespread publicity that served the Gold Coast well for many years. In seeking to develop wider appeal, the current official promotional themes of 'Ever Changing, Always Amazing' and 'The Coast with the Most' are more sophisticated and holistic, but less punchy and resonant. Definition of a single theme to embrace and project all of the qualities of the Gold Coast, and have tremendous impact, is difficult.

THE COAST BOOMED, JUST AS PREDICTED: A prediction that a colossal real estate boom would occur on the Gold Coast has come true nearly 22 years later... Boyd had seen the beginning of the great 'Gold Coast Rush' when land buyers were storming to the Coast to invest – sitting on their land and selling months later to triple their money... Boyd had the foresight to realise that this was just the beginning of a boom that would take many years to reach its peak... He quoted a local builder who moved from Melbourne to invest in the Coast: "This place is a balloon, I suppose, but don't expect it to burst. Look, we haven't even started to blow it up yet!" Boyd could feel the heartbeat of the Coast – progress and development..

*Gold Coast Bulletin
13 October 1979, p28*

THREE CHEERS FOR THESE FIGURES: Gold Coast City building approvals for the seven months to the end of January have topped last financial year's total. And this year's figure could be a record-shattering \$130 - \$140 million...

*Gold Coast Bulletin
2 February 1979, p15*

FLOATING THE COAST IN MELBOURNE: The Gold Coast City Council's award-winning float and the City Band will take part in the Moomba Festival in Melbourne on March 10... The Gold Coast float has gained honours at the Brisbane Warana, Sydney Waratah and Newcastle Mattara Festivals, and at the Toowoomba Festival of Flowers, and the Jacaranda Festival at Grafton.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
7 January 1969*

SAND, PRAWNS-AND LIFESAVERS... NEW THEME FOR OUR PROMOTIONS: The city council's public relations office will investigate the possibility of using sand, prawns and lifesavers as extra attractions for overseas promotions.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
27 May 1969, p5*

SHORT STRIDES TAKE COAST A LONG WAY: The Gold Coast is taking short strides in its bid to boost tourism... For on Monday one million pairs of Stubbies shorts will go on sale throughout Australia with special labels carrying a colour aerial picture of the Gold Coast... Details of a competition with Gold Coast holidays as prizes are on the reverse side of the label... The promotion will extend to New Zealand where 500,000 garments will be marketed... Mr Parry said that Stubbies is a Queensland company which in seven years has sold more than 24 million garments... The product typifies the Gold Coast casual lifestyle, freedom, beaches, sand and sun.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
22 September 1979, p19*

TRAVEL EXPERTS AGREE BIKINIS ARE DRAWCARD: The Gold Coast bikini girl won support as a good promotional image at the Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) convention yesterday... "Sex sells tours." The Gold Coast's bikini image has become a little tattered recently following attacks on the use of girls wearing nothing but pocket handkerchief-sized bikinis and goose pimples during southern winter promotions... "There's no doubt that the bikini girl has her place in a tourist promotion," he said.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
10 July 1969, p1*

THEY'RE OUT TO WOO A NEW CROP OF BIG SPENDERS: Bikini birds from Surfers Paradise have gone west to serenade the big spending cockies, they want them to come back to the Coast for a holiday... Resort operators from around Australia want the farmers to spend big in their towns.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
6 February 1979, p11*

5.2.3.3 Promotional schemes & gimmicks

Gimmickry is both a product and a function of the resort and speculative culture of the city.

5.2.3.4 Bikini girl promotions & Meter Maids

Bikini girl promotions and Meter Maids are synonymous with Surfers Paradise. When first introduced in the 1960s they were risqué, epitomised glamour and brought massive publicity to the Coast. Their promotional impact continued for many years but declined over time and in recent years, responding to declining financial support for their continued operation, they have become associated with touting and promotions on behalf of nightclubs and real estate marketers, which has tainted their image. Nevertheless bikini girl promotions and Meter Maids have been the Coast's most successful and enduring publicity stunt. Their image is indelible and a significant part of the city's heritage.

5.2.3.5 Targeted tourist markets

Part A – Correlation between targeted promotions & origin of tourists

There is a reasonable correlation between the targeting of tourism promotions and the cultural and socio-economic mix of tourists who visit the Gold Coast. There is no fixed ratio, however it is reasonable to identify trends. Promotional strategists take account of cultural and economic tendencies of potential tourist markets in determining targets, and then customise promotional activities to heighten the appeal of the Gold Coast to those specific markets.

Part B – Cultural & socio-economic profiles of visitors contribute to the character of the city

Because the visitor population within Gold Coast City at any time constitutes a significant proportion of the total population (18-30% according to ABS statistics), it has some bearing on the cultural and socio-economic mix which influences the character of the city.

Part C – General mix of tourists by origin

In reflection of promotional strategies (which inherently reflect positive cultural and economic tendencies of potential tourist markets), the mix of tourists by origin can be generalised as follows:

- Domestic tourists predominate, however, because they assimilate closely with the dominant lingual and cultural characteristics of the residential population their numbers are not distinctly noticeable in the everyday landscape.
- There are significant numbers of New Zealanders although this is only evident through conversation when their different accents become apparent.
- The Asian faces we see are predominantly Japanese, although increasingly from other parts of Asia particularly Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Korea.
- In recent years a noticeable number of Middle Eastern tourists has emerged.
- UK, European, American and Canadian tourists are included in the mix, however, their numbers are not significant and it is physically difficult to distinguish them physically from the dominant residential and domestic visitor populations.

5.2.3.6 Festivals and events

Festivals and events contribute to the spectacle and holiday atmosphere of the Gold Coast. They are vital promotional tools that generate wide publicity opportunities and economic spin-off benefits for the local economy. A diverse calendar

THE LURE OF THE GOLD COAST: The Gold Coast Visitors Bureau will woo 600 New Zealand travel agents with king prawns, avocados and beautiful girls next week at Hobart's Wrest Point Casino... She'll be part of a 20-strong delegation to staff a luxurious hospitality suite to persuade the agents the Gold Coast is "where the fun never sets."... "We hope to give them a feeling of warm sunshine radiating from the golden sunbathers of our Golden Girls," said an optimistic Brian Calvert, the bureau's marketing director.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
13 October 1979, p1*

STRENGTHENING TIES WITH THE MIDDLE EAST: A delegation from Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates today will visit the Gold Coast and further strengthen ties with our city and local industry... The economic, tourism and cultural interchange between the Gold Coast and the Middle East, in particular the United Arab Emirates, is huge.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
10 November 1999, p10*

COAST IN RACE FOR INDY RICHES: State Cabinet yesterday gave the green light to an Indy World Series motor race at Surfers Paradise – and believes it would be the biggest money-spinner staged on the tourist strip...

*Gold Coast Bulletin
11 October 1998, p1*

of events contributes to the attractions that the city has to offer tourists as well as opportunities to engage and entertain residents.

5.2.3.7 Film industry

Aspirations for establishment of a film industry at the Gold Coast are logical. As well as offering an ideal climate and diverse scenic locations, the culture of the Coast and its tourism industry fit naturally with the magic, fantasy and glamour associated with film-making and that industry's constant self-promotion and quest for recognition and acclaim.

5.2.3.8 Conventions

Conventioneering is a common, and in many cases a vital component of the economy of contemporary resort cities. The absence of a major conventions market at the Gold Coast has been attributed to the lack of a venue with the capacity to meet market expectations.

5.2.3.9 Holiday packaging

Packaging of holidays is an essential practice of the Gold Coast tourism market.

- Domestic holiday packaging offers tourists good deals, in which reduced costs are shared by travel, transfer, accommodation and entertainment providers in return for greater volume.
- Most international tourists to Australia do not visit only the Gold Coast – it is a destination on package tours that embrace other Australian cities and attractions.

Few stand-alone accommodation owners or tourist operators exist today. Most are connected, partially or wholly to the massive and complex system of wholesale and retail tourist marketing and reservations.

MAKE GOLD COAST FILM CAPITAL, SAYS BARRETT: ...Barrett said he could see no reason why the Gold Coast should not become the film mecca of Australia. "The Gold Coast has a special vibrancy and get up and go. And imagine what it would do for the tourism industry. Instead of spending \$10,000 on brochures showing sun, surf and bikini girls, a feature film set in and around the Gold Coast would be a built-in advertisement."...

*Gold Coast Bulletin
21 March 1979, p26*

45,000 TO ATTEND 150 COAST CONVENTIONS: The Gold Coast will get \$15 million worth of convention business this year, Mr Lee Black, Visitors Bureau chairman, said yesterday... He said a convention centre to seat 3000 would be a boon to the Gold Coast economy... he would like to see the Gold Coast one day become the "Convention capital of Australia..."

*Gold Coast Bulletin
6 February 1979, p2*

WE MUST SMASH THE TOURIST TRIANGLE: Mr Bruce Bishop (Liberal Surfers Paradise) has called on the State Government to provide extra money for tourism in the coming Budget... "And in Queensland, we only get about 4 per cent of those who come into the country... Most tourists go into the tourist triangle of Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra."... This triangle had to be smashed before Queensland would have a chance of winning a greater share of the market. He told the House that one way to help break the triangle was for Queensland to legislate casinos.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
14 September 1979*

5.2.3.10 Cheap air fares

Fluctuations in domestic airfares impact acutely on the tourism economy of the Gold Coast.

5.2.3.11 Places names as promotion

The Gold Coast possesses a lengthy tradition of promoting tourism and property speculation through place naming. Some names are a logical reflection of the natural environment, but typically, names have been appropriated from exotic places evoking fanciful analogies. Names express cultural aspirations and are chosen to project desirable imagery.

5.2.4 Disposition to tourism

The general eagerness to please and cater to the desires, or anticipated desires, of tourists is an outstanding characteristic of local government and business at the Gold Coast. It is not reasonable to suggest that at times, consideration of the needs and wishes of residents has taken second place.

5.2.5 Growing tourism

A multitude of ideas and schemes to grow tourism have been identified and employed at the Gold Coast. Among the more successful are theme parks, golfing, water-based activities and gaming. The introduction of duty free shopping to boost tourism backfired for Surfers Paradise. Incorporation of the Hinterland into the overall picture and palette of tourism is a long-recognised but underdeveloped concept.

5.2.6 Diversifying the economic base

While there has been a preoccupation with growing tourism since the 1950s, recognition of the need to diversify the Gold Coast's economic base has mounted. Tourism remains the undisputed basis of the area's economy. There is however, considerable effort to attract other complementary industries to augment the tourist industry and create employment and a 'stable backbone' for the regional economy as protection

INTERNAL AIR FARES CUT BY 40 PER CENT (A BIG LIFT FOR THE GOLD COAST): Domestic airfares have been slashed throughout Australia. "The Gold Coast and indeed all Queensland can expect to gain substantially from the new domestic air fare package"...

*Gold Coast Bulletin
12 April 1979, p2*

IS THE NAME GOLD COAST GOOD OR BAD? DO WE ATTRACT OR REPEL?: Is the name Gold Coast good or bad? Does it attract tourists with an image of luxury? Or turn them away by projecting an expensive image? ...Ald Small said the name Surfers Paradise was still the best known to potential tourists, but council promotions were pushing the name Gold Coast and it was becoming more widely known. Ald. McIlwain said he believed the name Gold Coast conveyed an image of living standards and an atmosphere which people could not find in their own towns. Some people in Brisbane still referred to the area as the South Coast, but gradually people were accepting the name Gold Coast.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
27 November 1969, p5*

DO WE CATER FOR TOURISTS?: The recent cartoon telling us that we can no longer rely entirely on our sunshine to attract tourists causes sufficient truth to cause us to think. ...That point accounts for the fact that many people go to other resorts. They want a surfing beach holiday and cannot obtain accommodation on the Gold Coast. ...What we have to ask ourselves is whether what we have to offer is the best of its kind, or whether somebody else in another resort can offer better quality...

*South Coast Bulletin
8 April 1959, p2 (Editorial)*

MARINAS GIVE 'BERTH' TO NEW TOURIST GROUP: Marinas and boat harbours are giving the Gold Coast tourism market a new dimension to boost the industry into the year 2000.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
19 September 1989, p101*

LIAISON AT LAST! INDUSTRY: The Gold Coast region's most urgent need today is new industries – they are vital to the area's future development. Tourism is still the undisputed basis of the area's economy. But past events have clearly demonstrated it is a basis that can be shaken by freaks of nature or economic squeezes. The region needs more industry: To provide a stable backbone to its development boom. To attract more permanent families. To provide alternative job opportunities for out-of-work tourism industry employees.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
30 July 1969, p1*

PUSHING COAST AS 'INNOVATION CITY': A push to rebrand the Gold Coast as 'Innovation City' continues to gather momentum, with key stakeholders electing an executive to drive the issue... The State Government was being lobbied to support the idea and put its imprimatur on the initiative.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
28 October 1999, p9*

'UNFAIR NONSENSE' ABOUT SURFERS IN AIRLINE AD: Gold Coast holiday accommodation owners are angry at a Philippines Airlines advertisement which says: '\$12 won't get you a bed in Surfers Paradise, but it will get you a night in Manila on your way to the world.'... The large display advertisement appeared in yesterday's Sydney Morning Herald... "It's inaccurate misleading and unfair. There are many motels in Surfers Paradise and elsewhere on the Gold Coast where you can get a comfortable serviced single from for \$12. Our motel is one of them."

*Gold Coast Bulletin
13 June 1979, p5*

against fluctuations in the tourist market.

In conjunction with the consolidation of tourism, the main push today for economic development is seeking to attract growth of education, high technology and clean, environmentally friendly industries. The city is being positioned as 'a total lifestyle package' to bring skilled workers and their families to live and work in a big city environment, surrounded by the benefits of a coastal lifestyle. This recent twist in direction essentially sees the Gold Coast as 'a city of substance as well as a city to have a holiday in' (Gold Coast Bulletin 8 March 1989, p4), innocuously subverting the traditional primacy of tourism.

5.2.7 Negative publicity

The Gold Coast is constantly the subject of negative publicity, typically generated from outside the city, to damage its reputation. Partly attributable to the 'tall poppy syndrome', back-handed slurs, which make derogatory reference to associations of the Gold Coast with criminal activity, get-rich-quick schemes, rip-off merchants, political cronyism and over development, in order to boost the image of other tourist destinations, has become commonplace.

Surfers Paradise, for a variety of reasons, but most commonly for its tall buildings, has borne the majority of the criticism. In a double twist, negative publicity about Surfers Paradise has come to be used as a tool for other places within the Gold Coast to gain leverage through distinguishing their image, and severing association with Surfers Paradise and external criticism connected with it.

Unavoidable negative publicity in response to occasional adverse weather events and related beach erosion causes concern to the tourism industry, which relies strongly on selling sunshine and beaches and is always quick to defend the Gold Coast's reputation for its extraordinarily great climate and white sands.

5.2.8 Eradicating growth inhibitors

As inhibitors to growth of tourism and property development, which are normally either environmental or political in nature, have arisen, they have generally been overcome. As growth needs of the industries have been identified, government has been instrumental in finding ways to absolve them. The council in particular, has pursued an ethos of ensuring that it does not 'hamstring' development initiatives and taken offence at any suggestion that its bureaucracy might inhibit enterprise. Needs which have been met include:

- Adequate water supply
- A variety of tourist accommodation types
- A casino and gaming in licensed clubs
- Extended shopping hours
- Reinstatement of a railway to Brisbane
- Upgrading of the Pacific Highway
- Upgrading of Coolangatta Airport (although not to international standard or status)
- Abolition of touting

Some growth inhibitors have been temporary and beyond the control of State and local government, notably fuel shortages in the 1970s and the national pilots' strike in 1989.

Other growth inhibitors, real and perceived, persist, including:

- The lack of a nudist beach
- Exorbitant and unrealistic rents in Surfers Paradise
- The practice of vertical integration and kickbacks which result in little benefit from overseas tourists flowing to local business operators
- Federal government restrictions applying to foreign airlines and lack of competition in domestic aviation
- Difficulties of financing tourism projects via traditional sources

WATER: The extent and the possible future dire seriousness of the Gold Coast water crisis is a shocker... Establishment of a new dam at present comes under the heading of "long-range" works. Obviously, it has to be transferred to the "urgent" category... A city – especially a go-ahead place like the Gold Coast will suffer in reputation, population and commercial development if we do not have a water system capable of coping with the area's natural all-round expansion.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
21 January 1969, p3*

THEME PARK MAY BE LOST TO TOKYO: The Gold Coast could lose a \$55 million theme park earmarked for Pimpama. A Japanese consortium is to meet today in Tokyo to determine where it wants to build the Footprints Discovery Park... "Securing funding for tourism projects via traditional sources is still difficult in Australia."

*Gold Coast Bulletin
20 January 2000, p3*

*NOW IS THE TIME TO BUY GOLD
COAST LAND: "Jumbo jets will, in the
very near future, fly direct to Queensland
and there will be many people among
these visitors who, once having seen
what the Coast has to offer, will return to
live here permanently. For this reason
alone, I am thoroughly convinced that
any investor, whether large or small,
would not, could not, possibly go wrong
by sinking as much money as possible
into land now... The Gold Coast is the
place where the money is in land
investment. I can assure you of that.*

*Gold Coast Bulletin
18 September 1969, p9*

*HOMES COME WITH NEW MERC:
The developer of a waterfront estate at
the Palm Meadows golf resort at
Carrara has moved to rev up sales by
offering a new Mercedes-Benz car with
each home sold...*

*Weekend Bulletin Real Estate
14-15 August 1999, p3*

*CAIRNS MAKING UP GROUND ON
COAST: Cairns is making up ground
on the Gold Coast as the favourite
Queensland area for investors, says
the Real Estate Institute of
Queensland. The REIQ says a
Queensland survey has shown that the
Gold Coast is still the state's
investment capital but that it is
beginning to be rivaled by Cairns...*

*Gold Coast Bulletin
2 January 1989, p17*

5.2.9 Real estate

At the Gold Coast, the real estate industry enjoys elevated status as a profession which plays an important function in the development of tourism and growth of the city.

The performance of the real estate market is affected by changes in land taxes, stamp duties, and capital gains tax, but its strength lies in public confidence in the market.

The key attractions for investors are lifestyle benefits and the relative affordability of housing or holiday units at the Gold Coast.

While enormous and sustained growth is evidence of continuing confidence, the Gold Coast has also been a haven for unscrupulous real estate agents whose practices have tarnished the reputation of the industry and the city.

The Gold Coast Bulletin has been instrumental in the function and promotion of real estate and personalities involved in the industry. It is no small wonder that some real estate agents have gained celebrity status and come to serve as leaders in local government and business organisations.

2.10 Competition

Certainly between 1959 and 1979, and probably longer, the Gold Coast singularly dominated the national tourism market, but the growth of destinations competing for a share of the market has eroded its supremacy.

Some rival destinations have grown from nothing, many smaller coastal resorts have enlarged and even cities which traditionally never functioned as sites of tourism, have cultivated tourist economies.

Within the Gold Coast since the 1950s, tourism activity has been most concentrated in Surfers Paradise but competition from multiple, surrounding localities such as Main Beach and Broadbeach, has emerged in recent years to unsettle its long-

standing confidence and challenge the ascendancy of Surfers Paradise.

2.11 Private enterprise

Private enterprise receives most of the credit for building the Gold Coast and there is a culture of reverence for businessmen, most of whom are property developers. Significant investments in the city are regarded as statements of confidence and loyalty. Financial risk-taking is seen as a courageous and almost noble pursuit. Businessmen, who accomplish developments that are regarded as good quality, are rewarded with great admiration, whether or not they yield a profit from the venture. It is notable that women rarely figure in this profile.

*MAN WITH THE MIDAS TOUCH:
Soheil Abedian, the Gold Coast
developer who is to take Versace hotels
to the world, has shown his Midas touch
by churning out more than \$10 million in
profits in 12 months.*

*Gold Coast Bulletin
10 September 1999, p1*

5.3 Social Landscape Reading – Core Themes

Eleven core themes within the Social Landscape, having been extracted from the Economic Landscape Reading, which is recorded in detail as *Appendix 3.0, pages 1-74*. Accompanying the text descriptions are some examples of the many newspaper articles from which the themes were derived. The table below summarises the eleven core themes.

Table 6 – Social Landscape Reading – Summary of Core Themes

Core Theme 3.1	A New Social Order
Core Theme 3.2	Why people flock to the Coast
Core Theme 3.3	Status symbols
Core Theme 3.4	Pursuit of pleasure
Core Theme 3.5	Yearning for praise
Core Theme 3.6	Attitudinal dualities & contradictions
Core Theme 3.7	Seeking a sense of history & community
Core Theme 3.8	Parodied stereotypes
Core Theme 3.9	Social dilemmas
Core Theme 3.10	Elements of disapproval
Core Theme 3.11	Changing products, trends & home fashion

5.3.1 A New Social Order

In 1949, the combined population of Southport and the small coastal settlements at the Coast was less than 10,000. Southport was the hub of activity. Social life, as familiar to most small towns, revolved mainly around community and sporting clubs and churches and engagement in organisations that aimed to improve the quality of civic life. Other popular social pastimes included the simple pleasures of sailing, fishing and the beach. There was a lingering sense of post-war austerity, but the atmosphere was increasingly bright and carefree.

...the jungle weather conditions lately have driven our business gals and young marrieds to the beach at any old interval between work and house chores. We've noticed Joyce Kennedy, Val Wellstead (wearing nice ring on the important finger), Thelma Hamilton with her three little girls, and Jean Swanson, among the crowds 'cooling off'...

South Coast Bulletin 1949

By 1959, a new up-beat tempo in growth and change was evident and increasingly attention turned to happenings across the river at Surfers Paradise, which became the focus of new developments in tourist accommodation and commercial entertainment venues.

200,000 VISITORS, SAYS MAYOR: The Mayor estimates that during the four-day holiday break, nearly 200,000 people flocked to the Gold Coast and adding to this the 60,000 permanent residents about a quarter of a million people were in the holiday centre... The Gold Coast has reached a new tempo. The whole place is vibrating...

*Gold Coast Bulletin
8 April 1969, p1*

By 1969, growth was fast and solid as a result of tourism and new settlers, attracted by the weather and easy-going lifestyle available at the Coast. A sense of buoyancy associated with the pace of progress, newness and a new *raison d'être* - individual pursuit of leisure, was palpable.

The momentum picked up exponentially in the 1970s, and has since continued at a steady rate. The Coast has grown into a major city with a new social order, based fundamentally on the creation of lifestyles of leisure and buoyed by sensations of growth, change and newness.

5.3.2 Why people flock to the Coast

Three primary reasons stand out to explain why people flock to the Gold Coast:

1. The enviable climate - Constant expressions of marvel at the good weather is part of the language and culture of the Gold Coast.
2. The magnificent beaches - People often comment especially on the cleanliness of the beaches. For some, it is the surf beyond the beach that is the real attraction.
3. The relaxed lifestyle - The carefree, fun, holiday atmosphere permeates even the lives of people living permanently and working in the city.

Other attractions commonly quoted are:

- The informality of dress sense
- The friendliness of people
- The relative ease of traffic and affordability of real estate in comparison to southern capital cities
- Shopping, particularly those who do not live in a southern capital city
- Restaurants, particularly outdoor dining
- Good facilities and a diverse range of accommodation types to cater for differing budgets and preferences of holidaymakers
- The variety of outdoor activities
- The Hinterland

THE REXES' FAVOURITE THINGS ABOUT SURFERS: SUNSHINE, MELONS GRAPES, FRIENDS: Perc and Iris Rex have packed their bags for the seventh time and left the snows, rains and strikes of England for Surfers Paradise... "It gets more time with us than any other place in Australia, because here it's easy to leave your troubles behind and have a good rest... Sunshine, watermelons, grapes and friends top our list of the things we enjoy most while on the Coast."

*Gold Coast Bulletin
6 February 1979*

5.3.3 Status symbols

Status symbols are related to cultural aspirations and in this regard, the Gold Coast exhibits some variation on the establishment regimes that generally dominate social life elsewhere.

Most logically deriving from its new social order based on leisure, growth, change and newness, there are strong inclinations for people to live out the images of fantasy and excess in way the Gold Coast is represented to the rest of the world.

There are innumerable different sub-cultures, such as surfing, yachting and many more, that are common to any city, and which have their own specific status symbols. However, the dominant regime of social status at the Gold Coast is most commonly referenced by symbols of wealth and luxury in real estate and accessories such as cars and boats that are part of the lifestyle package. Apartments in tall buildings - especially penthouses, waterfront homes – especially those on ‘Main River’ and beachfront properties – especially on ‘Hedges Avenue at Mermaid’ are particularly desirable.

HIGH LIFE AT SURFERS: For sheer showing off, dazzle, glamour and one-upmanship, consider a week at one of the four penthouses on the 33rd floor of the Golden Gate, Surfers Paradise. On the top floor are a pool, spa, sauna and cosy games room, then a swell sweep of stairs, lit by chandeliers, to the ground floor. Here you sink down to the ankles in plush champagne, gold carpet, gaze at the view from 18ft high windows, loll around on the most suede velvet settees or perhaps do a little light cooking. Caviare on toast perhaps – and crack a bottle of champagne to sip on the high-in-the-clouds balcony.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
13 March 1979, p21*

Anecdotally, there is also a remarkable proclivity for fetishism on the body, with high rates of cosmetic surgery and gym memberships presumably by people seeking to enhance their physical appearance and retain youthfulness.

As common elsewhere, fashionable clothes are a symbol of status. At the Gold Coast, the brand of sunglasses you wear is a particular symbol of status or aspiration.

In this city that is often regarded as lacking in intelligentsia, for some people Bond University has marked the maturity of the city, ‘underpinning it with intellectual depth’ and there is a certain status associated with studying at Bond University. While its reputation as a place for learning is reportedly well regarded, consistent with the dominant ethos of the city, it is

not unreasonable to suggest that the status of attending Bond University derives more from the financial rather than academic capacities of students to access it.

5.3.4 Pursuit of pleasure

Prior to development of the new social order at the Gold Coast in the late 1950s, pleasurable pursuits were commonly traditional small town and rural types of events and activities generally affiliated with clubs or churches, but the social scene changed dramatically and such proceedings were quickly overshadowed by more flamboyant events and festivities associated with the increasing holiday atmosphere on the strip.

GALAXY OF FUN AND SUN: ...It has been said that the Gold Coast has much more to offer in the way of entertainment than does Brisbane. This, then, is perhaps one reason why so many of our weekend visitors are from Brisbane.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
26 December 1969, p11*

- Surfers Paradise introduced a new glamorous nightlife to the city. Dining out in restaurants became popular. Hotels such as Lennons and The Chevron, offered meals and live entertainment. Charity events and beauty quests have been characteristic elements. Nightclub venues are numerous and have frequently adapted over the years to meet changing fashions in popular entertainment types, such as cabaret, disco and rock music.
- In the 1960s, Surfers Paradise was a very fashionable destination for honeymooners.
- In the 1960s and 1970s, Melbournians figured as a significant proportion of the holidaymakers, particularly during the spring school holidays and Christmas time. Social connections from home have been commonly transplanted temporarily to the Coast, or new networks with fellow Melbournians have been created whilst on holiday.
- Needless to say, the beaches, which are freely accessible to all, have always been the main daytime attraction. Surfboard riding is an obvious component of the Gold Coast's beach culture.

- If people tired of the beach they could bathe in their hotel or motel swimming pools, or stroll through the streets of Surfers Paradise where there is a variety of shops, eateries, novelties and games entertainment. When the weather is poor, there little in the way of daytime entertainment for visitors.
- Some club-based activities that are common elsewhere, but also fit logically with the Gold Coast's culture of leisure, such as bowling and surf life saving grew in popularity from the 1950s and have become mainstays within the culture of the Gold Coast. The widespread popularity of golfing and horse-racing is more recent.
- Boating activities from powerboat and yacht racing to more the leisurely pastimes of sailing, cruising or amateur fishing are a major social pursuit.
- An ever-changing range of minor attractions to entertain tourists is always available.
- Festivals and organised public entertainment contribute to the range of entertainment and holiday atmosphere of the city.

IT'S A HOLIDAY IN THE SUN: Surfers Paradise is bubbling over with happy people making the most of their 'holiday in the sun'... At Surfside 6 on the Esplanade yesterday the pool was a gay mixture of holiday folk from many corners of Australia, plus one visitor, Mr Don Danvin, all the way from Broadway, San Antonio, Texas... The Flamingo in Hanlan-St. is also brimming over with happy people... The welcome mat has been out at Riviera Motel for a number of holiday makers who have been regular guests at the motel over many years... Also back at the Riviera again are Mr and Mrs Jones and daughter, from Moonee Ponds. Mr and Mrs Donald Smith and family are staying at the motel after having just sold their property at Deniliquin. The family have already spent one month relaxing on the Coast and have decided to stay another month while making future plans.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
2 January 1969, p14*

The pursuit of pleasure is at the core of social intentions at the Gold Coast. There is a kaleidoscope of activities, permanent and temporary, commercial and non-commercial, good and poor quality, exciting and relaxing, daytime and nighttime. Most activities are outdoors. Everywhere in the landscape are receptacles for leisure.

5.3.5 Yearning for praise

There is a characteristic adolescent eagerness to receive praise about the Gold Coast from outsiders, particularly from celebrities, dignitaries and people with professional expertise. Favourable comparisons with other places have been a source of pride-building. Flattering results of surveys and competitions are lauded as successful performance evaluation. Rather than graciously wait for praise to be forthcoming,

WORLD TOP-RANKING TELEVISION STAR SUMS UP ... 'COAST OFFERS MORE THAN USA': My talk with Frank Fontaine, otherwise crazy Gugenheimer, co-star in the top-ranking Jackie Gleason show, was an exhilarating natter. Right from the first word. ...A few mouthfuls later Frankie said: "I really like your Gold Coast. It lives up to everything people are saying about it down south... The Gold Coast has everything that resorts have in the States. Yep, it has more than Miami,"...

*Gold Coast Bulletin
12 June 1969*

there are many instances of solicitation of praise through surveys and contests. In 1979, the council even held a contest for a Gold Coast anthem to become a permanent song of praise and affirmation for the city.

5.3.6 Attitudinal dualities & contradictions

There are multiple dualities and contradictions within the social landscape of the Gold Coast. These include:

- The existence of conservative prudishness alongside blatant and sometimes risqué imagery of sex associated with the beach. Skimpy bikinis, topless women and nude bathing are attractive to some and offensive to others. In a twist on this duality, there is contradiction in the current pursuit of Arab tourists, whose culture scorns the pervasive liberal and sexual associations with the beach. Related to this theme is male chauvinism which has surfaced frequently in matters such as women partaking in surf life saving and bowls;
- The long established appeal and popular practice of sun tanning which is now countered by concerns about skin damage and cancer;
- The massive encouragement of foreign tourism and investment that have benefited the Gold Coast economy, and frequent expressions of xenophobia, and similar contradictions in attitudes to southern tourists, investors and immigrants; and,
- At a micro scale within Surfers Paradise, there are conflicting attitudes to the patronage of local Gold Coast residents.

*NO ROOM FOR NUDE BATHING –
HUGHES: Alderman Lester Hughes
says nude bathing is all about private
parts and not the clothing. “Anyone who
has anything dangling between their
navel and their knees is straight into the
slammer. Nude bathing to me is very
black and white. It is defined in our by-
laws and it is also defined in the
Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences
Act by the State Government...*

*Gold Coast Bulletin
6 May 1989, p13*

5.3.7 Seeking a sense of history & community

Within the social order of the Gold Coast, the supremacy of growth, change and newness has tended to deny the establishment of organic, social attachments to history, but there is evidence as early as 1979 of people seeking connection to history. It is reasonable to suggest that their expressions of mourning about the loss of intimacy and civic pride stem mainly from a weaker sense of the community that was felt more strongly in earlier times. Instances of clutching to historic remnants, genuine and token, are increasingly apparent. Heritage places are commonly re-presented, such as the former Burleigh Heads Infant Saviour Church, which was hauled up Tamborine Mountain and converted to a restaurant/winery. A recent phenomenon is the revival of heritage festivals and introduction of new ones that celebrate the past in idealised, fictional ways. This aspect is not unique to the Gold Coast, it is reflective of interpretations of historic and indigenous cultural heritage occurring elsewhere.

SOVEREIGN ISLANDS ARE STEEPED IN MARITIME HISTORY: The Sovereign Islands contain the only tangible historic tribute to the real Gold Coast pioneers, the oystermen of the Broadwater. At the entry to the islands, set in a picturesque waterpark, is a tribute hewn into a granite rock which also contains a time capsule of local oystering history... Until the new Sovereign Islands were created, the sand masses in the Broadwater were known as Andy and Griffin Islands (after early oystermen)... The waterpark has been named Griffin Park in honour of the family...

*Gold Coast Bulletin
24 June 1989, p7*

5.3.8 Parodied stereotypes

Amongst the population of Gold Coasters there is an identifiable range of personality types popularly associated with the Gold Coast. Types include; the surfer, the bowler, the boatie, the gym junkie, and the hoon, all of which are common elsewhere but especially prevalent at the Coast. Particular stereotype personalities, about which there is much hype and parody, are the glamorous bikini birds and men of flimsy character who fit within the categories of 'con-men' and the 'white-shoe brigade'.

DIARY OF A CONMAN: At age 26, time has run out for international conman and playboy Peter Foster. The Gold Coast whiz kid who Rolls Royced it around the world with a bevy of beauty queens has been jailed in Los Angeles over a mail order tea swindle.

Gold Coast Bulletin 15 July 1989, p4

5.3.9 Social dilemmas

The growing Gold Coast is certainly not free of social dilemmas. Many social problems experienced are typical of any big city. Problems include; drugs, gambling, petty crime, unemployment, homelessness, poverty, unruly youth and isolation of the aged and of single people who have settled at

THE YOBBOS HAVE TAKEN OVER: Until recently Surfers Paradise was a wonderful Christmas-New year holiday resort for respectable people, both from interstate and nearby areas. But today is another story. Surfers Paradise is now a haven for the drunken hoodlum whose only thought is his or her next beer.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
9 January 1989, p8
(letter, Barbara Efron, Sorrento)*

ONE CLOUD: I see only one major long term cloud on the horizon and we have a grim warning of this in what has happened to Miami Beach. Florida, Miami is the story of a resort that has changed in a decade or so from being America's Playground into being the nation's Geriatric Capital, and nobody, including the older folk are very happy about it. I have a firm belief that most older people, tourist or resident, want to be part of a resort where there are plenty of lively young people – and not just their own age group. It's part of staying young, and the Gold Coast will have to guard very carefully against allowing itself to be turned into a vast retirement home.

*Gold Coast Bulletin 11 April 1979, p21
(From the Top by Bob Walder)*

BLIND SPOT: The reputation of the Gold Coast as a clip joint, where the resident population grows fat on the fleecing of holiday makers, seems to die hard in some areas. ...A Surfers Paradise businessman who recently visited Cairns told the Bulletin he did a little bit of private Coast promoting when he was there, but when he suggested the Gold Coast for a holiday, the reply he invariably received was: "We wouldn't go near the place. They're robbers there."

*Gold Coast Bulletin
22 October 1969, p3*

TELEVISION IS COMING: That we live in a scientific age where the miracle of yesterday is the commonplace of today needs practically no statement. There could be almost daily announcement of things undreamed of without provoking more than half-inch headlines in the daily press. Thus most people accept the coming of television in Queensland as a complete certainty, to be treated as nothing very wonderful...

*South Coast Bulletin
6 May 1959, p2*

the Gold Coast without traditional familiar social ties. Some problems are exacerbated by the characteristics of the sun-belt phenomenon, which puts constant pressure on social and physical infrastructure and creates a less than traditional social profile. Unemployment and increasing aged care needs are particular concerns.

There are also localised social problems that derive from the youth and tourist cultures within the city, such as car 'hoons', touting and schoolies.

Despite this seemingly defeating range of social problems, the overall social character of the city reflects stability and maturity.

5.3.10 Elements of disapproval

Numerous criticisms have been levelled at the Gold Coast.

These include claims of disapproval that it is:

- Over-priced
- A clip-joint where holidaymakers are fleeced
- Too Americanised
- Over-developed
- Unsafe
- Unsophisticated
- The beach spoiled by shadow from tall buildings
- Lacking in culture
- Too casual, a syndrome that leads to recklessness

5.3.11 Changing products, trends & home fashion

Advances in technology, trends in home decorating and entertainment manifest in the built environment and can evoke memories and a retrospective sense of the increasing levels of sophistication through time.

5.4 Political Landscape Reading – Core Themes

Seventeen core themes within the Political Landscape, having been extracted from the Political Landscape Reading, which is recorded in detail as *Appendix 4.0, pages 1-100*. Accompanying the text descriptions are some examples of the many newspaper articles from which the themes were derived. The table below summarises the seventeen core themes.

Table 7 – Political Landscape Reading – Summary of Core Themes

Core Theme 4.1	Tensions & opportunities in planning for growth
Core Theme 4.2	Shifting administrative boundaries
Core Theme 4.3	Political persuasions
Core Theme 4.4	Enigmatic politicians
Core Theme 4.5	Government funding priorities
Core Theme 4.6	Growing nature conservation ethos
Core Theme 4.7	Change Vs conservation of cultural heritage places
Core Theme 4.8	Urban character & amenity
Core Theme 4.9	Increasing community activism
Core Theme 4.10	Anti-developmentism
Core Theme 4.11	Competing tourism & residential interests
Core Theme 4.12	Accepting the validity of tourism as an industry
Core Theme 4.13	Sentiments of State Government neglect
Core Theme 4.14	Perennial political issues
Core Theme 4.15	Confusion about the Gold Coast’s identity
Core Theme 4.16	Alarm about the image of Surfers Paradise
Core Theme 4.17	Competitive swipes

5.4.1 Tensions & opportunities in planning for growth

A GREAT PLAN: ...a grand move in the right direction. While it will take many years to complete, its greatest quality lies in its completeness and its foresightedness... This area has great natural beauty, providing, as it does, such varied scenery within such a small area. Its climate is as equable and pleasant, we believe, as can be found anywhere. Its beaches are a great attraction to native citizens and tourist alike; not for nothing was one part of it named Surfers' Paradise. Now let men fulfill their plans with beautiful buildings and fine roads, and we shall have a place that may well be admired here and abroad...

*South Coast Bulletin
10 August 1949, p2*

COAST TOWN PLAN: ALDERMEN EXPRESS DOUBTS: The city council has given the 'green light' for preparation of a Gold Coast town plan despite a plea by some aldermen to 'wait and see how the planners perform'. Ald Ivan Gibbs said the council should wait a fortnight to see if pilot plan which the planners, Clarke, Gazzard and Partners had prepared for the area of Southport north Brisbane-Rd. ...Gold Coast Mayor, Ald Bruce Small, said there was a tendency to discount the value of services which could not be seen in the tangible form of bricks and mortar. The council had to realise the need and face the cost of paying experts to think and plan.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
20 March 1969, p8*

Despite its reputation as a city in which town planning and development control has played a minor part, the preparation and administration of planning schemes at the Gold Coast has been a central function of the local government since 1949. The first town plan, gazetted in 1953, and its various successors have been influential in shaping the city.

Sustainability is a relatively recent term in planning jargon but the principle of attaining growth through balance between development and natural attractions, and between the needs of residents and the tourist industry, has been an overarching quest that has never been refuted. The focus of political contest has been on how best to achieve sustainability through growth.

Growth has been facilitated by government primarily through:

1. Provision of infrastructure to increase attractions for investment; and,
2. Maintaining what is commonly regarded as a 'relaxed' approach to development control to accommodate spontaneity, opportunism and imagination, while guiding a sensible order for land use and development.

Infrastructure demands have changed in urgency over time as some are met and resolved, some remain constant and others emerge as the city grows.

Being physically, economically and socially, unconventional, the Gold Coast has faced many different land use and development tensions and opportunities, which have called for unusual methods of pursuing the basic town planning tenets of access, equity and sustainable growth.

Notwithstanding its flexible attitude to regulation of development, the council has been forced to constantly resist

challenges and negotiate exemptions from compliance with its planning legislation.

5.4.2 Shifting administrative boundaries

There have been three major turning points in local government administration within the period in which the Coast has grown from sleepy townships to a major city.

- 1949 – The Southport and Coolangatta Town Council areas were combined to create the Town of South Coast
- 1959 – The City of Gold Coast covering an odd, tadpole-shaped area, and the adjacent Albert Shire encompassing most of the Gold Coast’s hinterland, were created.
- 1995 – A new, larger City of Gold Coast was created through its amalgamation with the Albert Shire.

Prior to, and within this time span there has been extensive and parochial haggling about inefficiencies and ludicrous anomalies created by the odd administrative boundary designations, particularly with regard to funding and implementation of major urban infrastructure.

Since the creation of the current Gold Coast City, many of these contests have subsided. Occasional calls for its separation are prompted mainly by disgruntlement that the enormity of the current administrative area renders it ineffective in responding to local and neighbourhood issues. However, on the whole, the issue of shifting local government boundaries is presently dormant.

‘MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE ON THE GOLD COAST TODAY’ BOUNDARIES CHANGE VITAL TO FUTURE: The Bulletin completely agrees with Ald McIlwain when he says the matter of council boundaries is the most important regional issue today. With the new government now entrenched, the whole subject of boundaries throughout Queensland – both State and local authority – will be tackled. ...Hold-ups: The route of the freeway, which is a future must to keep a proper traffic flow in motion; The site of the Gold Coast’s Civic Centre, which is bound up with the contentious freeway question; The precise plan for future water supply; Control over drainage between Gold Coast and Albert Shire; canal construction; tourist promotion; roadways; commerce; business cooperation and a host of other local matters of public concern and progress priority... “The tadpole-shaped Gold Coast city with a big head and long tail, was the product of a commission from the ‘horse and buggy’ days... The men who actually established the Gold Coast boundary in 1949 had fixed it east of the swamps, into which they believed no one would venture.” Ald McIlwain said the Albert and Gold Coast councils could not reach agreement over the route of the proposed expressway... the cost or route of a planned master canal (and other issues)

*Gold Coast Bulletin
10 June 1969*

AN ELECTION WARNING TO THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA'S GREATEST TOURIST CITY!: If this should happen, the "Coast" – the "capital" of the Australian tourist industry and the very mecca of free enterprise – could find itself on the Opposition benches for the first time in its history with its present powerful influence on Government policies gone. ...The Coast has always been represented in the State Parliament by the Country party. Consequently it is completely honest to say that no-one other than our Country Party Members, Russ Hinze and Cec Carey, can fairly claim Government credit for the Gold Coast's fantastic success story. They are the Members who have done the job.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
13 May 1969, p28*

5.4.3 Political persuasions

Queensland generally has had a reputation for 'redneck' politics, largely derivative from the long reigning era of the conservative government between 1957 – 1989, led by in the most part by Joh Bjelke-Petersen.

Free enterprise developmentism has been central to the regime, often regarded as being too willing to exploit natural resources to the detriment of their intrinsic ecological values. In favour of the free enterprise system, the Joh Bjelke-Petersen government held a tight rein on civil liberties. Political censorship was characteristic and unionism regarded as subversive. Protest marching was illegal. Simultaneously, the Government maintained traditions of anachronistic laws founded on moral issues that outlawed or at least restricted matters such as nude bathing, liquor licensing and gambling. For the Gold Coast, intent on maximising tourism potential, these matters were widely regarded as stifling progress. Recent decades have seen increasing liberalisation, but these issues continue to be politically vexing.

In the 'Joh' era the Gold Coast gained a reputation as a bastion of free enterprise. On numerous occasions the State Government exercised ministerial planning powers to overrule local government, approving ad hoc land use rezonings, often as special favours for certain developers, justified as removal of obstructions to growth.

The Fitzgerald Inquiry in the late 1980s uncovered widespread political corruption through which Queensland, and particularly the Gold Coast, gained a national reputation for corrupt government and cronyism. This destabilised the conservative regime and the Labor party was elected to office in 1989 after being in opposition for more than 30 years.

Official party affiliations have not figured in politics at local government level. It is generally regarded that a majority of councillors have conservative leanings favouring the

National and Liberal Parties, although the prominence of conservative political persuasions is uncertain and, as evidenced by the election of Labor party members in seven of the eight State seats within the Gold Coast region, appears to be diminishing.

5.4.4 Enigmatic politicians

Within its recent history, the Gold Coast has produced some high profile politicians. During the last decade, Rob Borbidge, State Member for Surfers Paradise served as Premier and more recently as leader of the opposition National Party. At the local level, notable for frequent outrageous actions, councillors such as Kerry Smith and Dawn Crichlow and the would-be 'Mayor with Flair' Brian Shepherd, have been colourful figures within the local political scene. However, two politicians, now deceased, have stood out in the political landscape. These are Bruce Small and Russ Hinze, both of whom were closely associated with the dominant Joh regime and eminently influential in shaping the Gold Coast. Their reputations extended beyond Queensland. Nationally notorious, these men became regarded as symbols of the political nature of the Gold Coast.

Bruce Small was involved in land development and has left a legacy of canal estates, including Isle of Capri, Sorrento, Cypress Gardens, Sorrento and Benowa. As a politician who served terms as Mayor and State Member for Surfers Paradise, Small was flamboyant and controversial with grand visions for development of the Gold Coast. However, he is perhaps best remembered for leading the bikini girl tourism promotions in the southern states, New Zealand and Japan, which brought massive publicity to the Coast in the 1970s.

Russ Hinze served as an Albert Shire councillor, but he is remembered best for his long-time role as an influential State politician in the Joh Bjelke-Petersen government when he became known as 'the Minister for Everything' with a

SIR BRUCE: THE MAGIC KNIGHT: One of the Gold Coast's most colourful characters, Sir Bruce Small, has recently announced his retirement from politics to re-enter the high-power world of real estate. During his controversial reigns as Gold Coast Mayor Sir Bruce provided lots of action in council, extra good headlines for the press and plenty of amusement for visiting southerners. During this period Sir Bruce had blueprinted a 2000-acre satellite city to be known as Paradise City which would incorporate Capri, Sorrento, and Benowa. Now that Sir Bruce has slammed the door of the mayoral chamber for the last time he has redirected his extraordinary talents towards the creation and fulfilment of a dream with the release of his latest real estate development, Benowa Waters Estate... Sir Bruce is a magician. Who else could turn 100 acres of mangrove swamp into magnificent canal-front Utopia?

*Gold Coast Bulletin
4 January 1979, p41*

SHOULD RUSS GET A GOLDOLA?: The Minister for Main Roads, Mr Russ Hinze, leaves shortly for Vienna to study autobahns. But Mr Kevin Hopper said in State Parliament that 'with the Minister's limited knowledge of roads it would be more appropriate if he went to Venice.'

*Gold Coast Bulletin
25 August 1979, p5*

reputation for making things happen. Hinze passed away under a cloud of insinuations of involvement in land rorts and corruption.

5.4.5 Government funding priorities

Campaign speeches in the lead up to local government elections for a newly amalgamated Town of South Coast in 1949 indicated grand visions for the future of the region as a tourist paradise. Candidates presented blueprints for growth, identifying a comprehensive range of prerequisites. Identified necessities for expansion of tourism, some of which were very basic, included:

SOUTH COAST C.M.O POLICY: ...you will agree I am sure, that the South Coast can only be what its citizens make it. We have here by the Grace of God, one of the most beautiful areas in the world, splendid climate and all those potentialities which make life really worth living... don't let us be self-satisfied, for if we are to profit from our wonderful endowments we must be up and doing. In short as our objects say, "become civic-minded" and make this place a world-renowned Australian beauty spot... may I draw a comparison with California, where hard work and civic pride have transformed a veritable desert into a land of beauty? Application to this are the memorable words, "This land that was desolate has become like the Garden of Eden". The Californian always uses the slogan "Nothing is impossible in California." And believe me, by the inculcation of civic pride this has become nearly a religion with them. What is possible in California is not impossible in the Town of the South Coast, so let us develop civic pride, and help the CMO candidates to make the South Coast a veritable "Garden of Eden"

*South Coast Bulletin
20 April 1949, p11*

- Town planning
- Water supply, channelling and drainage
- Sewerage
- Lighting
- Mosquito control
- Reclamation of swamplands "with a view to making them useful for home-building"
- Good roads and a fast motor transport service between Brisbane and the Coast
- Electrification of the railway and its connection to Murwillumbah via a coastal route
- Enlargement of the airport at Bilinga
- Camping facilities
- Parks
- Children's playgrounds
- Swimming pools
- Recreational centres
- Erosion control
- A Broadcasting Station
- Preference to private enterprise
- Encouragement to tourists
- Abolition or liberalisation of building restrictions.

Most of these were progressively provided, particularly those within the capacity of local government, and became part of the fabric of the city. Twenty years later, additional needs for further expansion of tourism and also servicing for the growing resident population had emerged, including:

- Liberalisation of liquor laws
- Upgrading of the airport to cater for jumbo jets
- Financial incentives for tourism investment
- A regional planning authority
- Increased provision of public hospitals
- Casino gambling
- Funding for welfare services and aged care
- Preservation of flora and fauna and maintenance of wildlife reserves
- Establishment of new industries to complement tourism

By 1999, the State Government budget reflected enormous funding allocations needed primarily to meet the needs of the growing residential population. Predominant expenditure items were education, hospitals, law and order.

Of the many demands for government funding over the years, the following issues have attracted the most attention and debate:

Water Supply & Sewerage: First and foremost was the need to establish plentiful water supply. There were allusions to California, as a model for transforming a desert into a ‘Garden of Eden’. Sewerage also was a high priority. Major capital works to progressively increase the water supply capacity and sewerage have been funded by the State Government and are maintained today as a major function of the council.

Roads, Traffic & Car Parking and the Possibility of a Light Rail System: A major and ever-increasing funding item is the continual upgrading of roads and provision of car parking to meet the ever-increasing traffic and parking needs. In recent years, the potential and priority for implementation of a light rail system to off-set some of the pressure on the road system has become increasingly real.

Railway: Since removal of the original railways to Southport and Coolangatta in the 1960s, until the eventual reinstatement of a line to Robina in 1998, the lack of a passenger rail service to Brisbane was a hotly contested issue.

A ‘CREEPING PARALYSIS’ ON COAST: A ‘creeping paralysis’ is starting to cover roads of the Gold Coast.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
27 January 1989, p10
(letter, Geoff Ives, Robina)*

“RESTORE RAILWAY”: “It is most unusual for a major centre not to be serviced by a rail system and the Gold Coast is no exception. I believe that we should go further and have a rail system which not only serves the Gold Coast but also links up with Murwillumbah, so that we have a direct rail connection with the south,” said Mr Scanlan.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
February 1969, p3*

200M SHORT OF A GOOD AIRPORT: It is important that the Gold Coast has an international airport and 200 metres of Tweed Shire land should not block this project... If the Tweed Council is so short-sighted not to see the great boost to tourism that an international airport will give this Coast, then they are indeed not worthy of using it...

Weekend Bulletin 28-29 August 1999, p32 (letter, Paul Severien, Robina)

30,000 CAMPERS FOR COAST: The Gold Coast Council's Health Department, led by Chief Inspector, Mr Lionel Perry, is making plans for an expected 30,000 campers over the Christmas holidays. To accommodate them, the Council has spent more than £7,500 during the last 12 months improving sites from Rainbow Bay to Labrador.

*South Coast Bulletin
9 December 1959, p1*

'DON'T BE COMPLACENT – THE CRISIS IS FAR FROM OVER': A Gold Coast alderman has been accused of attempting to scare the city by warning that the beach erosion crisis is 'far from over'... "To protect beaches a nourishment programme is very essential... "But there is no need to be complacent. We will have to nourish the beaches to feed this greedy ocean."

Gold Coast Bulletin 27 May 1969, p5

COUNCIL CHANGES ITS MIND OVER THE BENOWA CIVIC CENTRE SITE: The city council has been told that the people of the Gold Coast do not want a civic centre established at Benowa – but they would like to see one at Macintosh Island.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
17 December 1969, p6*

The Tropicarnival festival has developed into one of the Gold Coast's major events spanning several weeks and entertaining 203,000 people last year. Most of the funding for Tropicarnival is provided by the Gold Coast City Council, which also offers thousands of dollars worth of assistance in kind...

*Gold Coast Bulletin
31 August 1999, p10*

I'M INSULTED: As a resident of Mudgeeraba I'm confused as to where our community is heading. Governments, both local and state, seem to insist that tourism is the sole economic source of the Gold Coast. I feel somewhat insulted that my rates and taxes appear to be so trivial. I would like to remind all parties that residents vote, tourists don't.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
1 October 1999, p12
(letter, Scott Keys, Mudgeeraba)*

Airport: A continually vexing and unresolved issue is the desire of the tourism industry for expansion of Coolangatta airport for international passenger services. The matter is complicated by local residential concerns about increased noise and pollution, and destruction of wetlands, and the Federal Government's regulation of the airline industry and limitations on the national system of international terminals.

Tourist Amenities, Parks, Gardens & Streetscaping: Council funding of facilities such as camp grounds and parks, and beautification schemes to make the city attractive for tourists has been substantial.

Beach Maintenance, Waterways & Surf Safety: Maintenance of the beaches and waterways has been a principal concern and major expenditure item for the Council. Funding for surf safety programs is also substantial.

Centres–Cultural/Administration/Convention: Provision of major facilities for civic, cultural and convention activities has always been difficult, not only in terms of sourcing funding, but also in deciding where they should be situated as there is no single, logical location that is central and easily accessible to all potential users.

Marketing, Festivals & Events: There are increasing expectations for government funding of cultural and promotional activities.

Proportional Expenditure in Surfers Paradise: The proportional contribution of Surfers Paradise to local government revenue is significant, but expectations of the increasing proportion of permanent residents for provision of conventional community services and facilities, are placing increasing demands on the council to distribute funding more evenly throughout the city, thus competing with tourism demands for improvements in Surfers Paradise.

5.4.6 Growing nature conservation ethos

Since the 1970s, concern for nature conservation has escalated to become one of the main political issues at the Gold Coast.

- Land reclamation of 'menacing, mosquito infested, swampy wasteland', widely supported in the 1950s and 1960s has come to be viewed as destruction of ecologically valuable 'wetlands'.
- Development proposals, first entertained in the 1980s for the Nerang River Floodplain, have become fiercely contested in the 1990s. Floodplain management is complex. Engineering solutions for flood mitigation, such as raising Hinze Dam or creating a second seaway are regarded with suspicion and there is a strong sense in the community that floodplain areas should be kept free of further development. Canal estate development has come to be regarded as environmentally irresponsible.
- Vegetation has become increasingly treasured for natural, wildlife habitat and scenic values. Alarm about destruction of vegetation to make way for development has prompted the introduction of tree preservation by-laws and heightened the demand to reserve areas for nature conservation, as has occurred at Coombabah wetlands, Burleigh Headland, South Stradbroke Island, Currumbin Creek estuary, many areas within the Scenic Rim and mangrove wetland areas generally.
- The introduction of exotic plant species, particularly within Hinterland areas is increasingly regarded as inappropriate.
- Notable development proposals that have threatened natural areas and been successfully resisted include creation of a boat harbour within the Currumbin Estuary in 1979, major resort development on South Stradbroke Island in 1989, and most recently efforts to develop Naturelink - a cableway system from Mudgeeraba to Springbrook.

"Many residents on the Coast are not aware of the benefits of land reclamation," Mr Carey said. "The delightful residential area known as Rankine Estate at Main Beach was once a mosquito-infested hole known as Sharks Bay. The reclamation not only gave the Coast one of its most exclusive building areas, but also the present yacht basin."

*Gold Coast Bulletin
8 January 1969*

The preposterous proposition of a seaway through Mermaid Beach indicates the gravity of our Council's problems. They now admit that tens of thousands of houses have been built on flood prone land yet they continue to approve more vulnerable development. Would minimum education standards for council candidates be too much to ask?

*Gold Coast Bulletin
14 October 1999, p12
(phone-in, Greg Parker, Tallebudgera)*

LET'S HAVE MORE TREES: I have just congratulated a building contractor for planting shrubs and trees before starting to construct a block of units at Surfers Paradise. He said he did this so that there would be a good growth of greenery by the time the people move into the units in about six months time. If only every other builder thought the same way, how much more pleasant the Gold Coast would be. The City Council should not give permits to build any substantial structure unless the plans are accompanied by landscaping and planning intentions. And someone should be hauled over the coals for wasting time and money making flower beds that look like graves at Cascade Gardens.

Gold Coast Bulletin April 1979 (letter, Mrs Maia Wakelam, Broadbeach)

GREEN MAY TURN BROWN: The people of Springbrook are very passionate people about their tiny community. About 500 people live here permanently. Not a big place. To inject 900 tourists an hour in a cable car plus buses and cars is inappropriate... So much for the green behind the gold - more like the brown behind the gold.

*Weekend Bulletin
29-30 January 2000, p34
(letter, Kevin Rochester, Springbrook)*

GOD WILL 'WIPE-OUT' THE COAST, WARNS SURF KING: Currumbin, Palm Beach and Burleigh Point are in danger of being ruined for surf-riding by existing or proposed beach development, say leading surfers. And current world champion surfer, Wayne Bartholomew, has warned that one day 'God will say 'wipeout' and wash all the developments away...

*Gold Coast Bulletin
15 June 1979, p2*

- Mining of the ocean beaches for rutile caused major opposition and was finally prohibited in 1989. Interference with the natural beach systems, however, for beach maintenance and erosion control is strongly supported and generally regarded as a necessity.
- Proposals to interfere with natural coastal systems have been increasingly regarded with nervousness and suspicion.

5.4.7 Change Vs conservation of cultural heritage places

Within the rapid and recent history of the Gold Coast since the 1950s, there have been some notable losses of heritage places. Demolition of landmarks has caused sad spectacle but that is generally soothed by the promise of new and better replacements.

In the everyday landscape, particularly within the coastal strip where substantial re-development is occurring, it is common for places to disappear without a trace and vanish from memory almost overnight. Change and progress have been favoured over conservation of built heritage and there has been a general nonchalance about erasure of the past.

There is a broad range of community opinion about what constitutes urban heritage and is worthy of protection. As a natural process of the maturing city there is increasing attention to defining what its heritage is and related to this mounting desire to keep some things that represent connection to the past.

This presents a precarious challenge to find ways to conserve places of cultural heritage significance and areas that have a special character deriving from their historical structure and fabric, without stagnating the vibrancy and sense of change which is a central aspect of the city's culture that transcends the cultural values of material places in the built environment.

HERITAGE HEAD SAD OVER CHURCH LOSS: It is a disgrace that the Church of the Infant Saviour is being demolished, says the chairman of the Australian Heritage Commission. "A key landmark in the seaside city, the church provided a sense of place and was an example of a particular ecclesiastic architecture in the area. It was a disappearing kind of heritage building which represents Gold Coast historic periods and types of architecture." Mr King said the 1930s Spanish mission style church illustrated the development of Burleigh Heads as a tourist resort... The Church's passing is a great loss to Gold Coast history and indictment on those who believe that progress means erasing the past."

*Weekend Bulletin
30-31 October 1999*

5.4.8 Urban character & amenity

Urban character and amenity are psychological matters closely related to sense of community and feelings of civic pride. Imminent change to established character or amenity often creates community unease and political reaction. Elements that have predominated in debate about character and amenity at the Gold Coast are tall buildings, bomb sites, regulation of design preferences and thematic expression, and advertising signs.

Tall Buildings: Debate about the Gold Coast's tall buildings, has extended beyond the city. Most Australians like to pass comment about the Gold Coast and commonly they offer negative or snide remarks about its characteristic high-rise development which creates a dramatic contrast with its surrounding natural and urban landscapes.

BEWARE OF SKYSCRAPERS: Serious considerations should be given by Town Council before issuing permits for buildings like the proposed skyscrapers in Surfers Paradise, which are fraught with many problems... why this rabid idea to live on top of each other and create congested areas which usually become slums eventually irrespective of initial cost and planning...

*South Coast Bulletin
28 January 1959, p2
(letter, J Hoyland, Southport)*

At the local level, where redevelopment is larger and less personal than what it replaces, as is usually the case with high rise development, it not only impacts on the character and amenity of the locality, but it can also be intimidating.

Alongside the continual momentum and support for high rise development have been counter arguments for its limitation and even prohibition. In 1959, even before the construction of the first tall building there were fearful suggestions of congestion and slums. In 1969, even before the 1970s explosion of high rise development that formed the dramatic skyline, fears of a concrete jungle were being projected.

In addition to the confronting contrast, part of this fear can be attributed to negative associations with high rise social housing experiments in other cities in the 1960s. There is also a sense of association with tall commercial buildings that are generally located in the business centres of large cities, which is anathematic to the image of a peaceful holiday.

SOMETHING OF BEAUTY PLEASE:

...we hope that the council has taken steps to ensure that the re-development (of the Chevron site proposed by Theo Morris) is done with the minimum of disruption to tourists, traffic and adjacent businesses. Most of all we hope that Mr Morris will build a place of beauty in the centre of the town – not just another mass of concrete with a plethora of overpriced and undersized retail outlets – and produce for the delight of the Gold Coast something of the beauty of the Sheraton and Marina Mirage...

*Gold Coast Bulletin
16 May 1989, p8
(letter, P Kirkwood, Surfers Paradise)*

THE SWING OF THE PENDULUM: It is indeed alarming to observe what Alderman Baildon refers to as the “Beirut Look” of the Gold Coast with scenes not unlike those of London during the blitz. All those sites that have been purchased, often by rather mysterious means, the improvements bulldozed and the site then probably rezoned and put back on the market... One somehow gets the impression that the economic cycle has reached its extreme point and is about to reverse direction.”

*Gold Coast Bulletin
11 July 1989, p8*

‘ALDERMAN WILL HAVE FINAL SAY:

...If asked whether he thought that these aldermen had any special expertise in house design or construction, Ald Paterson said: “You’ll have to ask them.” To a similar question, Ald Diamond replied: “I haven’t any such expertise. My husband and I ran hotels.”... Asked what there was to inhibit aldermen from making decisions to the advantage of their own residential areas and possibly to the disadvantage of other neighbourhoods, Ald Paterson said: “That’s a curly one. I’ve never thought about it.”... He was then asked whether he thought that the materials of which a house was built were of greater or lesser importance than the aesthetics of the design itself... “Aesthetics are just as important as materials,” he said. “You can certainly get ghastly-looking brick houses and good looking fibre ones”... Asked to nominate the major single factor which influenced the council to introduce the new rule, Ald Paterson said: “It’s probably the way in which some investors find an empty block in a street of good looking houses and build a pretty poor kind of house on it... “This puts up that house’s value but pulls the value of the others down.”

The amenity and sense of community for people dwelling within localities in the coastal strip that were formerly low rise in nature, certainly changes with the intrusion of high rise development (particularly during the construction phase). Commonly residents experience a sense of invasion, which is generally rendered acceptable by increased property values and a sense of inevitability about wholesale change in the form and character of the area.

The criticism most frequently levelled at the tall buildings is the disgust at afternoon shadows cast on the beach. The substance of arguments about their impact is exaggerated.

Bomb sites: Large vacant sites in Surfers Paradise created by demolition in the 1980s and left undeveloped for many years, have been viewed with contempt for their adverse impact on the character of the locality. Reminiscent of bomb sites, these sites have been considered to create the appearance of a desolate war zone, described as ‘the Beirut Look’. Their visual detractor conflicts with aspirations for a vibrant tourist hub and has caused extensive debate over many years, which will only dry up as new developments take place.

Regulating Design Preferences: As with fashion generally, there is a changing sense of building design preferences. While many design criteria can be evaluated for their functional and environmental appropriateness, arbitration of aesthetics is more tricky. Regulation of aesthetics has the potential to sanitise urban character and deny individual expression and personalisation. Efforts to prescribe design aesthetics have generally been resisted.

Thematic Expression: While thematic expression is ubiquitous within the landscape, proposals of pure fantasy and extreme thematicism have been increasingly scrutinised and criticised. Highlighting the importance of the cultural landscape individuals' construction of identity, these excessive themed environments are scorned by some for their superficiality, and wholeheartedly embraced by others.

Advertising signs: There has been constant concern about the excess of signage in the city. Controlling advertising signs is a constant and difficult issue for the council. Efforts to regulate signage against monotony, and untidy clutter can also inhibit positive contributions of signs which can create visual interest and serve as orientation points within the landscape.

5.4.9 Increasing community activism

Organisations such as progress associations and chambers of commerce, formed with an interest in generally improving their local areas, have existed at the Gold Coast for many years. More recently, there has been mounting community activism that is more narrowly focused on and reactive to specific needs and issues such as nature conservation or equity for senior citizens. These organisations serve largely as 'watchdogs' to guard their respective ideals through application of political pressure.

5.4.10 Anti-developmentism

Coinciding with increasing levels of environmental awareness and expectations for environmental sensitivity have been mounting expressions of anti-developmentism.

Developers have been criticised for 'wrecking' the Coast with their 'develop at all costs' attitudes by many who perceive development as harmful, destructive and exploitative. They are experiencing increasing pressure to implement designs that lessen environmental impacts, but which often result in increased costs or reduced profits.

DOLLY OF AN IDEA!: Your editorial about Dolly Parton opening up a theme park was right when it asked the question 'What's wrong with a development from Dolly Parton?' . When our society is already so Americanised stopping such developments is a bit like shutting the gate after the bronco has bolted. If the proposal is tasteful viable and enticing to tourists, I say bring it on.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
20 March 2000, p14
(letter, John Dimmock, Nerang)*

SIGN CRACKDOWN TOO HARSH: TRADER: The Gold Coast City Council has decided to crackdown on illegal shopfront advertisements in an attempt to rid the tourist strip of 'cluttered, intrusive and unsafe' signs...

*Weekend Bulletin
18-19 September 1999, p18*

NEW GROUP TO GUARD COAST ENVIRONMENT: More than 40 people have rallied to establish a conservation watch group and an environment centre on the Gold Coast... A meeting called by the Friends of Currumbin Association, the residents and others indicated their support for the group's most ambitious project yet... conservation watch was a new facet of the association designed to involve as many people from the community including students, teachers, housewives and others to gather information about environmental habits. The second thrust of the environmental campaign is to establish an environment centre called 'Biosphere'...

*Gold Coast Bulletin
22 July 1989, p20*

CURBING THE DEVELOPER: A director of a real estate firm has predicted that 'some very influential developers' will now leave the Gold Coast as a result of tighter building restrictions on high-rise. This is the best news I've heard for years! Could I suggest a fund to help them on their way?

*Gold Coast Bulletin
26 November 1979, p6
(letter, Patrick Kilvington, Southport)*

While some people call for ‘slowing-down’ development, it is simultaneously argued that the city needs growth to prosper. Consequently, the solution must be ‘good’ design. Efforts, particularly by the council, to foster better urban design, are evident.

5.4.11 Competing tourism & residential interests

There is a growing sense of permanence within the Gold Coast community as the proportion of residents overwhelms the proportion of tourists in the city.

Resident demands differ from those of the tourism industry. Peacefulness and order are desirable characteristics of residential amenity. Tourists seek more playful, spontaneous and diverse environments. Separating the two is not practical or desirable. Equitable and appropriate budget allocation for capital works and service provision is difficult.

With increasing efforts to foster diversification of the economic base, the shift from the city’s traditional culture of leisure, transiency and holidaymaking to a more ordinary, permanent residential culture is certain to accelerate.

The implications of this shift are severe. The emerging scenario presents multiple competing objectives that are fundamental to the nature of the cultural landscape and difficult to negotiate.

Most threatening is the erosion of the Gold Coast’s distinctiveness and playful urbanism to a more ordinary cultural landscape resembling more ‘serious’ cities. For Surfers Paradise, which is seemingly robust in a visual sense, increasing mediocrity within the broader overall cultural landscape of the city will dilute its image and almost undermine some of its appeal for tourists.

PLAY AREAS: I think we should have more playground facilities in Helensvale. Children end up sitting in doors glued to the television...

*Weekend Bulletin
4-5 September 1999
(letter, Jaclyn Parry, Helensvale)*

5.4.12 Accepting the validity of tourism as an industry

In Queensland history, first priority has always been given to economic development based on primary production. In 1969 tourism was the State's fourth largest and fastest growing industry. Today is its second only to mining. Although the status of tourism as a major contributor to the State economy was recognised by Government with a separate Minister for Tourism and the establishment the Queensland Tourism Council in 1979, as recently as 1989, tourism was ranked 14th on the government's list of portfolios. The importance of tourism to Queensland and the importance of the Gold Coast to tourism have been have been under-rated. The tourism industry has failed to attract the support and levels funding deserving of its real importance to the economy.

A PRIORITY QUESTION: Tourism is Australia's fastest-growing industry and second biggest export earner, currently contributing \$27 billion to the national economy each year... The Federal Government ranks tourism 13th on its list of portfolios, lumping it in with arts, sport the environment and territories. The Queensland Government goes one worse, ranking it 14th in a portfolio pot-pourri which takes in industry, small business and technology... it is encouraging to hear State Opposition Leader Wayne Goss promise that a Labor Government would upgrade tourism, making it a separate ministry linked with sport and racing...

*Gold Coast Bulletin
11 August 1989, p8 (Editorial)*

5.4.13 Sentiments of State Government neglect

Within Gold Coast politics there is a sense that the city has been neglected by the State Government and left to develop virtually on its own. There has been a particularly uneasy relationship with recent Labor State Governments. It is generally believed that the Labor government is reticent to give the Gold Coast the support that it deserves because it has traditionally been a conservative stronghold. Despite concerted efforts in 1999 by Premier Beattie to mend the relationship, sentiments of neglect linger. It remains to be seen whether the neglect dissipates following the surprise gain by Labor of the Gold Coast's seven of the eight State seats in the 2001 election.

MARATHON MAULING – MINISTER SLAMS ROBERTSON OVER 'FAMILY FUN RUN': One of the Gold Coast's premier events, the JALF Marathon, has been described in Parliament as the worst organised race ever and more like a family fun run... Mayor Gary Baidon said the marathon was one of the Gold Coast's greatest and longest running events and 'it shouldn't be about personalities'. 'This event is crucial to the future of the Gold Coast'... Mr Gibbs launched his attack in response to a question in Parliament about accusations the labor Government was reticent about doing anything for the Gold Coast because it was a conservative stronghold.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
20 August 1999*

5.4.14 Perennial political issues

There are some miscellaneous issues that are best classified as perennial, which cause political anxiety and for which it seems there may never be satisfactory resolution. These include:

REMOVE THE TIME WARP: The State Government can no longer remain in a time warp. It must move the clock forward and introduce daylight saving in Queensland... Former Premier Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen and current leader Mike Ahern consistently rejected the plausible argument of major commercial and tourism interests, presumably because they were reluctant to interfere with routine down on the farm. This is archaic thinking in a state which projects itself as a paradise for international tourism and seeks to woo the tycoons of overseas commerce and trade. It is time for a more dynamic, realistic and up to the minute approach.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
7 July 1989, p10 (Editorial)*

OFF THE BOIL COAST NEEDS A CITY VISION: The Gold Coast is like a bit theme park which needs new attractions every couple of years to 'keep the sizzle,' says a Gold Coast business leader... He says building approvals in Surfers Paradise are at their lowest in six years and investor confidence is down... Mr Burow said it was essential the recommendations from the recent Surfers Paradise summit, presided over by world-renowned lateral thinker Dr Edward de Bono, were implemented.

*Gold Coast Bulletin
26 November 1999, p16*

GREED IS DESTROYING SURFERS: How sick and tired I am of people blaming each other for the downturn of Surfers Paradise. Why not go back to the basics and analyse what made Surfers Paradise in the first place? It was 'Joe Aussie' and his family. They came in cars, stayed in caravans and tents and could afford to stay a couple of weeks. But then the greedy ones took over. Developers avid for the dollar began to tear down the small motels which afforded the tourist reasonable cost accommodation, and in their place rose great monoliths which cost an arm and a leg just to stay a night. Maybe at last the party is over and the greed will stop. I don't believe it's too late to start wooing 'Joe Aussie' back, if life is to be sustained...

*Gold Coast Bulletin 9 May 1989, p8
(letter, Bob Foreman, Bundall)*

- Xenophobia, particularly in relation to foreign ownership of land;
- Conservative State attitudes to gambling & liquor licensing and prostitution;
- Daylight saving; and,
- Council in-fighting and political squabbling.

5.4.15 Confusion about the Gold Coast's identity

Since at least 1989 there have been creeping expressions of uncertainty and flagging confidence in the future of the Gold Coast. There has been a sense of bittersweet realisation that the city is moving into a new era and taking on a new identity. There are fears of chaos in the face of continuing residential growth and there is uncertainty about how to maintain the 'the sizzle' of a tourist paradise. A sense of urgency to define a new vision for the city has developed.

5.4.16 Alarm about the image of Surfers Paradise

Concern about the image of Surfers Paradise was strong in 1989, but by 1999 disenchantment, frustration and even fury about how to turn around its apparent downturn had come to a crisis point. There was strong sentiment that Surfers Paradise had 'lost its character and identity' and was in urgent need of a rescue package.

Some people believed that Surfers Paradise just needs 'a few trees and a cleaning up', but many other issues thought to be contributing to its stagnation were raised.

Physical Issues	Social Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Too much high rise development ▪ Needs a department store ▪ Colourless, tired and sad streetscape needs upgrading ▪ Traffic – Surfers is a speedway for through traffic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mixed identity - party town or a family town? ▪ Lack of local culture – residents have been driven out ▪ Lawlessness – need more police ▪ Anti-Japanese sentiment ▪ Air of negativity
Economic Issues	Political Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Competition from nearby centres thriving with local patronage ▪ Inadequate promotion ▪ High rents and land taxes ▪ Archaic liquor laws and trading hours ▪ No daylight saving ▪ Poor customer service ▪ Inadequate airline and airport services ▪ Catering too much for wealthy international tourists and forgetting ‘Mr and Mrs Aussie’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Divided business community ▪ Property and commercial interests not inclusive ▪ Male dogmatism, self-aggrandisement and ego driven adversarial thinking ▪ Insufficient drive of many individuals ▪ Lack of acknowledgement and support as the ‘engine room’ of the Coast ▪ Expectation that the council is responsible for the decline and for its resurrection

Business leaders convened a summit led by ‘lateral thinking guru’ Dr Edward de Bono to pinpoint critical issues and identify a strategy for action.

Most of the above matters were identified and the key outcomes were that:

1. Surfers Paradise is a whole-of-city issue; and,
2. Working together can produce powerful outcomes

There was enthusiastic and determined resolve about the need for all stakeholders to unite under a new vision for Surfers Paradise. The editor of the Bulletin responded with the following words of wisdom:

For a city that grew like Topsy within three decades, the idea of a shared vision is difficult to absorb. Surfers Paradise sprang from the sand with the help of a thousand and one individuals, caught up in the excitement of building a dream town. The making of paradise was akin to a gold rush; everyone wanted to stake their claim in the leisure capital of Australia. The high-rises that grew along the beaches were testament to the desires of developers, Brisbane leisure-seekers and holiday-makers from around the nation. But at some point – possibly in the past five years – the drive of individuals became insufficient to sustain the pace. Surfers Paradise was clobbered by a series of misfortunes – some from overseas, some from home – that served as a wake-up call for all who cared about the future of this ‘tinsel town.’ For the first time in its history, Surfers Paradise has begun to acknowledge that it must work as an entity, not as a collection of can-do soloists.

Gold Coast Bulletin, 7 October 1999, p10

Consensus building as a paradigm for planning and decision-making has been uncharacteristic of Surfers Paradise. Its emergence marks a fundamental change in the overall culture of Surfers Paradise and the suggestion that it requires a fixed vision to work towards reflects a new way of thinking that reflects a lack of the confidence and belief in itself which have driven its unique character and constituted its authenticity.

This new approach will need to encompass sophistication and innovation if it is to attract people to ‘fall in love again with Surfers Paradise.’

The Chevron Renaissance development is a promising sign and positive recent contribution to Surfers Paradise, not just for its elimination of a central ‘bomb site’, the introduction of colorful, pedestrian friendly spaces and a new sense of vitality, also for its expression of confidence in the future of Surfers Paradise.

5.4.17 Competitive swipes

Rivalry between the Gold Coast and competing tourist destinations has always occurred, but belittling swipes at the image of the Gold Coast and more specifically Surfers Paradise have become frequent since the 1980s. An unofficial, but real anti-Gold Coast campaign from many sources has been orchestrated. Competitors typically gain

PARADISE PEEVED BY ROAR OF MICE: Gold Coast councillor Eddy Sarroff has been told to stop referring to Broadbeach as the new heart of the city... The outspoken councillor said he was not attempting to downplay Surfers Paradise's importance to the city but to highlight Broadbeach's growing popularity with families and locals... "I think Cr Sarroff has got an envy syndrome." he (Tom Tate) said, likening Cr Sarroff to the 'mouse that roared.' "Broadbeach is a bit like a mouse that is trying to outshine the elephant. It is still a very precious area but is not a precious gemstone like Surfers Paradise."

*Gold Coast Bulletin
1 October 1999, p9*

leverage by deploring the city's over-developed, trashy and superficial. Over time, this has gnawed away at the Gold Coast's characteristically bold sense of confidence and belief in itself and caused people to question its identity. The impact on Surfers Paradise, which is the common focus of such swipes, has been even more acute.

6.0 THE ROLE OF INVISIBLE LANDSCAPES

The multiple, single-perspective landscape readings in the previous chapter confirm the initial proposition that the Gold Coast, in particular Surfers Paradise, can be interpreted in ways that reveal the complexities, causes and meanings embedded in its cultural landscape.

This chapter responds to Research Question 2, which asked: *“If the complexion of the landscape is imbued with causes and meanings greater than its physical substance, what is the role of such qualities, i.e. invisible landscapes, which are not apparent to the uninformed observer?”*

An interesting finding is that despite our typical preponderance of the physical landscape, the range of themes encapsulated in the physical landscape reading (i.e. the visible landscape) is remarkably smaller than the range of themes that has evolved from each of the three invisible landscape readings. This finding does not deny that the visible landscape is a determining characteristic in the identity of the city. Indeed, it is apparent that interconnections between the economic, social and political landscapes are grounded in subsidiary issues or themes largely concerned with the essential differences in the visible landscape, which set the Gold Coast apart from other, more traditional cities. What it does mandate is that understanding of the city as a cultural phenomenon relies also on these less tangible, invisible landscapes.

The landscape readings reveal complex meanings and causal relationships that exist between the physical, economic, social and political landscapes. Because the four landscape perspectives and their respective core themes can be read separately, or in combination, the reader can mentally process issues both in isolation, and in the broader context of the cultural landscape. The real benefits of revealing invisible landscape issues in this way are cognitive. The method facilitates more complex perception of the landscape, by helping the observer to see and understand complexities and interrelationships within the cultural landscape.

The findings support common theoretical understandings that the cultural landscape is multi-dimensional. In this, the research can be regarded as an extension of cultural landscape theory and interpretation methods.

The progressive value of this study’s recognition of invisible landscapes, however, is that it flags deficiency in the ways that we generally approach management of the cultural landscape through preoccupation with physical outcomes. Because we are attuned to interpreting the city

primarily through physical perspectives, urban planning, design and management practices afford little weight to the role of invisible landscapes.

At the Gold Coast, this has been acceptable during its formative years until the last real boom in the 1980s, because in the momentum of building the city, economic, social and political issues at play largely deferred to the astounding physical growth. Today, however, the permanent population has grown from a minor demographic and support role in growth of the city, to a substantial and burgeoning cultural mass that has a momentum of its own in which economic, social and political issues have assumed greater influence.

The Gold Coast exhibits a reversal of the conventional order of evolution of cultural landscapes. In most cities, economic, social and political factors have traditionally been determinants of city form and expression that develop over long time periods. Development of the Gold Coast's cultural landscape has been rapid and recent. In the shadow of the spectacular natural and man-made visible landscape, invisible landscapes have been almost consciously suppressed and a distortion of the cultural perspective has resulted. Public perceptions of the cultural landscape, and management practices, have remained fixated on the physical landscape, failing to catch up with the changing reality of the increasing influence of invisible landscapes.

It is not intended to suggest that the nature of urban planning and design has remained static. Recent years have seen dramatic widening from the confines of statutory control of development and physical infrastructure provision, to quality of life issues and image-making. This shift is not unique to the Gold Coast. It is a prevalent reaction to increasing commodification of cultural landscapes, which is becoming the norm as cities are no longer just places of production and exchange, but places of spectacle and entertainment. In this respect, it is actually reasonable to suggest that the Gold Coast "has a 100 year jump on everyone else." (Allom, quoted in *The Courier Mail*, 27 March 1999). The Gold Coast has flourished on leisure and image-making from its inception and its general form and expression accommodate and even embrace such post-modern characteristics. Urban planners and managers in traditional 'ordinary' cities within Australia and through much of the Western world are however, experiencing tension as these new features and modes of production are being forced into existing urban fabrics.

What this means for all cities, particularly those in which tourism and/or residential growth are significant economic factors, is that the vitality of the cultural landscape is increasingly important. The image projected by the cultural landscape is the poster and advertisement for such industries. Managing the image of a city is tricky. Imagery is superficial, but it is also imbued with multiple values and meanings that can transcend the power of the visible landscape.

Simple and powerful imagery based on its dramatic and distinctive physical landscape, has served the Gold Coast well for many years, but as the multiple landscape readings reveal, the growing city is increasingly complex and elements that may threaten its distinctiveness and ascendancy as ‘The Coast with the Most’ are increasingly influential. There are vulnerable elements within the visible landscape such as the blurring of the sharp-edged urban landscape and contrast between the ‘gold and the green’ by suburban development of the hinterland foothills, but changes are also occurring in the invisible landscapes. Several of the more profound change agents include:

- a shift from the Gold Coast’s traditional culture of leisure, transiency and holiday making to a more ordinary, permanent residential culture that rejects the former;
- increasingly sophisticated systems of governance, and particularly the emergence of consensus-building, as a paradigm for planning and decision-making, which inherently restrains spontaneity that has been a defining characteristic of the city; and,
- growing concern and support for conservation of heritage places, which is important in maintaining the diversity of the landscape, but if not managed carefully, could stagnate the vibrancy and sense of change which is a central aspect of the Gold Coast’s culture.

There are some distinctly negative elements or qualities within the invisible landscapes. Examples may be social dilemmas such as crime and unemployment, economic issues such as adverse publicity or political issues such sentiments of neglect by the State Government. While not denying that these problems should be tackled, it is important to accept that cultural landscape interpretation is not necessarily about identifying ways to manage such specific issues. Rather, it is about seeing and understanding all of these issues together as part of the landscape.

It follows that if we can make sense of the cultural landscape with its complexities and interconnections, we will be better able to:

- identify vulnerable elements which require special attention;
- identify elements that take care of themselves; and,
- recognise elements which are outside our sphere of influence,

so that the multitude of community members, organisations and different levels and agencies of government can rationalise and prioritise actions and devise ways to deal with their specific interest areas.

For too long, the invisible landscapes of the Gold Coast have been ignored. If the Gold Coast is to develop a more enlightened appreciation of its own identity, and better management of its cultural landscape, the dynamic forces at play need to be accepted and more sophisticated approaches that include consideration of the invisible landscapes need to be devised.

It is beyond the intention and scope of this dissertation to explore opportunities for improving management of the cultural landscape.

The critical message that this research offers is that to sustain and strengthen the image, meanings and values that make the Gold Coast attractive to visitors and residents, it is important to include consideration of invisible landscapes.

This objective should be pursued in further research and in practice through endeavours of all actors who play a part in influencing evolution of the cultural landscape.

7.0 CONCLUSION

In most, if not all, cultural landscapes there is a fascination with the visible landscape and the idea of marking the invisible economic, social and political landscapes is problematical. At the Gold Coast this problem is amplified because the city's physical form and expression are unconventional, and when we try to read the cultural landscape through conventional socio-political orders and socio-economic representations within cities, confusion and misunderstanding inevitably occur. The consequence is a denial of recognition of the complexity of meanings and values embedded in the landscape.

This thesis is the result of case study research on the cultural landscape of the Gold Coast. It concentrates on Surfers Paradise, the most potent image of this tourist city, which displays a physical form and post-modern thematic and spectacular characteristics that confound normative interpretations of the cultural landscape.

The central objective of the thesis is to facilitate deeper understanding of the unique cultural landscape of Surfers Paradise in the expectation that greater awareness will lead to improved decision-making and action by government and community members to conserve and enhance its particular qualities. In the words of Michel Foucault "we are all tourists in that our gaze alights constantly upon a world of which we must make sense". The study is for the Gold Coast's urban managers, citizens and visitors. It offers an interpretive framework and resource to help them make sense of the cultural landscape of the city.

Chapter Two sets the historical context for the cultural peculiarities of Surfers Paradise, within broader frames of the Gold Coast and the State of Queensland.

Chapter Three explores theoretical and practical disciplines related to interpretation and management of the cultural landscape. It determines that the Gold Coast is a strange alchemy that is impossible to position neatly within existing theory and practice. It develops a new theoretical position, which responds to deficiency in the ways that we read and understand the cultural landscape. Essentially, it establishes that our fascination with the visible landscape denies substantive recognition of the complexity of meanings and values embedded in the cultural landscape, so if we are to gain a more rounded appreciation of the substance of the city,

we need to become better at complex perception to include consideration of the ‘invisible’ economic, social and political landscapes.

Chapter Four explains the research technique that was undertaken to develop an explicit and grounded framework for interpretation of the invisible landscapes of the Gold Coast. Four single-perspective landscape readings were derived from text about the city collected from the *Gold Coast Bulletin* (formerly *South Coast Bulletin*) published between 1949 and 1999. The four readings include a conventional reading of the physical landscape, presented alongside readings of the economic, social and political landscapes, which are typically invisible to the casual observer.

Chapter Five fulfils the core intention of this research to provide a deep and substantial re-interpretation of the landscape of Surfers Paradise. It presents 44 core themes within the four, single-perspective landscape readings, which can be considered to represent the substance of the cultural landscape. The themes can be read either separately, grouped according to their singular perspectives, or altogether. When understood collectively, they are more comprehensive than conventional interpretations that are limited to analysis of the physical landscape, and certainly more meaningful than typical chronological accounts of history. Importantly, the simultaneous readings of the visible (physical landscape) and invisible landscape readings:

- facilitate a heightened sense of place through presenting a dynamic understanding of the cultural landscape in which the past, present and future are seamlessly connected;
- expose the popular dismissal and denigration of the Gold Coast as cultural chauvinism, and demonstrate that the Gold Coast is a burgeoning cultural mass that is widely misunderstood and undervalued;
- reveal those aspects of Gold Coast’s culture which make it distinctive; and,
- enable the reader to discern elements within the cultural landscape that are vulnerable and in need of special attention in urban planning, design and management.

Chapter Six is the final part of the dissertation. It argues that for too long, the invisible landscapes of the Gold Coast have been ignored. For the city to continue to prosper, the vitality of its cultural landscape, which is a key tourism resource, needs to be sustained. To develop a more enlightened appreciation of the cultural landscape we need to become better at complex perception to include consideration of the invisible landscapes. If we are able to recognise critical and interrelated cultural landscape issues, it follows that we will be better equipped to devise more sophisticated and effective management approaches.

While the interpretive intentions and findings of this research are specific to the Gold Coast and offer greatest value for that city, a rewarding dividend is that both the theoretical position and interpretive process could be applied universally.

It is especially gratifying to recognise the paradox that:

Emerging from this study about the Gold Coast, are lessons which have relevance for interpreting and managing more traditional, 'serious' cities that have in the latter part of the 20th century, unwittingly adopted some of the Gold Coast's characteristic post-modern thematic expressions and sun-belt urbanism forms.

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